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SIR STAMFORD RAFFLES

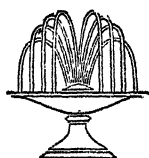
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RAFFLES OF SINGAPORE

by
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*Let it still be the boast of Britain to
write her name in characters of light.*

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ON October 19, 1781, the day on which Cornwallis, hemmed in by land and sea, surrendered to Washington at York Town, the first British Empire died. On April 12, 1782, when Rodney caught and crippled the French fleet among the Leeward Islands, the second British Empire, it may be said, was born. For by the 'Battle of the Saints' the British command of the sea was recovered, not to be lost again; and it was this command of the sea that made possible, if not almost certain, the building up of a new British world-society on the ruins of the old.

A few months before the first of these decisive events, on July 6, 1781, there was born, on board the merchant ship *Ann* off Port Morant in Jamaica, a boy who in after life was to take a memorable part in the work of imperial reconstruction. The place of his birth was appropriate; for Thomas Stamford Raffles' career was to be associated with the expansion of British trade in the tropics. And, born afloat and under a far-ranging flag, he was to achieve his life's work not, like most men, within a more or less narrow radius of his birthplace, but among seas and islands on the opposite side of the globe—not in the West Indies, but in the East Indies.

Raffles' father was the Master of the *Ann*, engaged in the trade between London and Jamaica. Of his family little is known except that it had been connected for some generations in the past with Beverley in Yorkshire, where one of his ancestors, like one of Wilberforce's, was once mayor. Nothing at all is known of his mother's family, except the name of Lyde. And over the son's early years hangs as dark a veil. It is not till he is about twelve that at last it rises and discloses him at a boarding-school kept

by a Dr. Anderson at Hammersmith. He is devoted to animals, it appears, and to gardening ; but of his education, of his life at the school, there is nothing at all on record except that it was short. Captain Raffles, it seems, had not made a success of his profession. He was not merely a poor man, he was seriously in debt ; and it was a sordid necessity that his only surviving son should be set to earn what money he could at the earliest possible age. Before he was quite fourteen, therefore, an "extra-clerkship" having been obtained for him in the office of the East India Company, Thomas Stamford said good-bye to Dr. Anderson and entered, as he put it in later days, "the busy scenes of public life." "I have never ceased to deplore," he once wrote, "the necessity which withdrew me so early from school."

At an age, then, when happier contemporaries with great careers ahead of them had still some years to run at Eton and a spell at Oxford or Cambridge to follow, young Raffles entered the East India House in Leadenhall Street and sat down at his desk. And there for five years he worked as few boys have ever worked, not only at his office duties, but, in every leisure moment he could snatch, to continue his education. Born with the gift of tongues, he applied himself to French and mastered it. He read widely in the English and French classics. He set himself, with a special and lasting zest, to acquire some scientific knowledge of the animal and vegetable world. And, all the while, the boy was harassed and cramped by the anxieties and exigencies of poverty at home. "I shall never forget," he said long afterwards, "the mortification I felt when the penury of my family once induced my mother to complain of my extravagance in burning a candle in my room." A rather depressing, a rather stunted life, very different from life at Eton ; but after five years of it the picture brightens a little. Raffles' private work before and after office hours had not prevented him from satisfying his employers. His

industry and capacity, indeed, had made such a deep impression at the India House that in 1800 he obtained by merit a post on the regular establishment which would normally have been filled by patronage. It meant a substantial rise in salary, and it enabled him to earn extra pay by doing extra work. He was presently getting as much as £100 a year and contributing to the upkeep of his family—but at a cost. He had always been delicate; he was probably ill-nourished; and now for the first time, but not by any means for the last, he began to overstrain himself. Once there was a whisper of consumption. Neither then nor at any time, however, would Raffles surrender to his body. On the one recorded occasion on which he was positively ordered to leave his work and take a fortnight's holiday, he set out on foot for the Welsh mountains, walked no less than thirty or forty miles a day, and returned to his desk in the best of health and spirits. And so for five more years he toiled on—five tremendous years while Europe shook beneath Napoleon's tread, the years of Marengo and Hohenlinden, the armistice of Amiens, the camp at Boulogne, the prelude to Trafalgar and Austerlitz. What did Raffles think of the history that was being made around him? What were his opinions of the great men of the day? Did he worship Pitt, like most of those more favoured youths? Or was he inclined to defy majorities and to defend unpopular causes? Was Fox his leader? And what were his own ambitions? Did he aspire to play a part himself among the heroes of that epic age?

He certainly had ambitions. "You always said," he wrote in 1811, at one of the great moments of his life, to an intimate friend of those early days, "I was a strange, wild fellow, insatiable in ambition, though meek as a maiden." And one can hazard a guess as to whither his hopes were pointing. He had no need to look beyond the records of the India House for precedents of young men, unendowed with family influence or wealth, rising rapidly

to fame and fortune. What was to prevent him from treading the path that Clive had trod? He belonged, undoubtedly, to the species of Englishman that has always instinctively responded to the call of the East. For such men the very names of ancient Indian cities have a fascination of their own; and even the heavy atmosphere of Leadenhall Street, even the dull materials of his daily work, the business correspondence, the bills of lading, the financial statements, may have been tinged for Raffles with romance. And there was a more substantial consideration that pointed to the East. Intensely devoted to his family, especially to his mother, bitterly exasperated by the unceasing fight with poverty, the big worries of debt, the little worries of scraping and stinting to make both ends meet from day to day, young Raffles must have longed above all else to "make his fortune" and to make it quickly. And where had fortunes been so quickly made as in India? The homecoming of the "Nabobs" had been one of the most portentous events in the social life of eighteenth-century England. Their great days, it is true, were over now. The one sinister phase of the British connection with India had passed, and passed for ever. Englishmen could no longer amass fabulous wealth in a few years by illicit trading or less excusable means in Bengal. But the servants of the Company in India were now far better paid. Good, if by no means extravagant, salaries were now regarded not only as the obvious preventive of corruption but as a means of attracting ambitious young men to face the exile and the climate, so much deadlier then than now. And once his foot was on the official ladder, an Indian civil servant might climb high and, at a relatively early age and with perfect honesty, be able to build up what would seem quite a little fortune to a clerk who stayed at home.

It is fairly safe to assume, then, that Raffles, throughout those laborious years of apprenticeship, was hoping that his industry might some day be rewarded by an appointment

in the East. That, at any rate, was the fate that came to him suddenly in 1805. The East India Company, as will be seen, had hitherto made little advance in the south and east beyond its field in India proper ; but it had recently acquired possession of the Island of Penang or Prince of Wales' Island, and the Court of Directors had now decided to constitute it, together with a strip of territory on the Malayan mainland known as Province Wellesley, a regular Presidency with a Governor and Council.* To this new Government Raffles was appointed Assistant Secretary with a salary of £1,500 a year. It was much more than he could have expected. Such a post was by no means at the bottom of the ladder. It was, in fact, a remarkable promotion for a clerk of twenty-four. And he had won it by merit again and merit alone. In urging his appointment, Mr. Ramsay, the Company's Secretary at the India House, had declared that the departure of so competent a subordinate " would be like the loss of a limb to him " ; but he could not, he added, obstruct the promotion of one who possessed " such superior talents and so amiable a character." As for Raffles, the world, at a stroke, had been transformed for him. Never again, perhaps, was he to feel such an overwhelming sense of relief or enjoy a personal triumph quite so unalloyed. Now at last he could satisfy his filial piety. He could begin to disperse that cloud of debt. He could ensure that his parents' declining years were saved from the misery of want. He could take his eldest sister out to Penang with him. More, he could set up as a family man himself. He could marry the charming and gifted woman, Olivia Fancourt, with whom he had fallen deeply in love, and take her with him too. And now at last, also, no longer a prisoner in Leadenhall Street, he could begin to deal with that insatiable ambition. He was going East.

* A map will be found at the end of this book.

THERE followed another five-year period of very hard work. It began on the voyage out—a business in those days of several months. When Raffles embarked in April 1805, he set himself to learn the language of the native people among whom he was henceforth to live, and soon after his arrival at Penang in September he could speak and read and write Malay with ease. It was a notable achievement in itself, and in its results it had a decisive influence on Raffles' career. For it enabled him to get to know the Malays. It was and is no easy thing for an Englishman really to know that shy, reserved, mercurial, attractive people. It cannot be done, indeed, as Sir Frank Swettenham has said—and no one can speak with more authority—unless, in the first place, the Englishman can talk with them freely in their own tongue. And the second essential qualification is sympathy, the true sympathy that reveals itself in natural tact and courtesy and consideration. Raffles, then, had only to acquire that first essential, the language ; for with the second—the most precious gift that any European can possess whose lot it is to live among the backward races of the world—he had been born. And so, before he had been long at Penang, the heart of the Malays lay open to him. From the first he encouraged them to visit him and talk to him. The more he understood them, the better he liked them. And they responded. For Raffles, it is clear, was one of those fine spirits, not by any means so rare as some superficial observers would have us suppose, whose privilege it is to temper the inevitable harshness of the impact of European civilisation on a remote and simple people. He had soon broken through their shyness, so impenetrable to a stranger of coarser mould. He had soon won their con-

fidence, and they were telling him all they knew of their own people and their customs and traditions. When seafarers from other parts of the island-world of Malaya put in at Penang, they would be brought to visit him, "greatly pleased," as an English officer noted in his journal, "to find a person holding Mr. Raffles' situation able and anxious to converse with them in their own language." Thus Raffles' knowledge of the Malays spread steadily beyond Penang and its neighbourhood. Talking to innumerable natives from all parts, reading every scrap of written record he could find, he soon acquired a knowledge of Malaya past and present such as only one or two other Englishmen possessed. He became not only something of a *savant* in that little-known oriental field, but an enthusiast; and out of his enthusiasm there shaped itself presently a dream—the dream of his life. The Company he served had recently been forced to broaden the basis of its policy in India; but its policy outside India, he knew well enough, was still simply and solely commercial. In so far as it might desire to extend its operations in the Malayan area—and of that there was as yet no sign at all—it would be only with a view to increasing the annual shipments of pepper and spice to England. But while this, as Raffles would have avowed, might fairly be the first aim, might it not be linked with something else? Might not the expansion of British trade mean also the spread of humane, protective, civilising influences among the Malayan people? Might not all Malaya attain, some day, under British tutelage, to a safer, freer, happier life than it could ever find unaided?

The growth in Raffles' mind of this idea is an interesting phenomenon. It was just at this time that the new humanitarianism was beginning to influence a large and growing body of public opinion in England. The theory that commercial intercourse with backward races involved a moral obligation towards them had been born out of the great debate that centred round the personalities of Clive

and Burke and Warren Hastings. It had been strengthened by the other great debate which followed it and made an even deeper and wider mark on the public mind—the debate on the abolition of the slave trade, now nearing its long-deferred conclusion. A new doctrine, in fact, had taken its place in the science of human politics, the doctrine of “trusteeship.” But it is impossible to say that Raffles was directly influenced by this movement of thought in England. It is most improbable that the young clerk in Leadenhall Street had met or talked with any of its leaders. One day it was inevitable that he should make Wilberforce’s acquaintance, but that day was still some years ahead. Nor is there any hint that Raffles in his youth was interested in English history or politics. His whole mind seems to have been given to literature and natural science. And, in after life, as his own policy developed, he never appealed to established precedents or principles. He never mentioned Burke. Unlike more gilded youths, unlike a Wellesley or a Minto or a Hastings, born and brought up in an atmosphere steeped in the political traditions of their class, Raffles had grown up in a narrow little world of his own, quite unconnected with, apparently quite uninterested in, the personalities and problems of public life ; and it is probable that he had few, if any, ideas in his mind about the treatment of backward races when he was suddenly flung into the East. So his ideas, when he acquired them, though they might accord with the new humanitarian doctrine, were not in the least doctrinaire. They were the direct outcome, it seems, of his personal experience, his innate good sense and sensibility, and his “ amiable character.” He met the Malays. He got to know them. He learned to love them. It was good, he felt, for Englishmen to do what they could to help them.

This process of getting to know the Malays, enjoyable though it was to Raffles, was no mere pastime. Grappling with the language and its various dialects, practising the

writing of that exotic Arabic script, reading Malay parchments, even those delightful if protracted conversations—it was all hard work ; and, like the extra work in London, it could only be done in the early or evening hours off duty. The better part of the day was occupied by official tasks. Or, rather, obsessed by them. For Raffles had quickly become an even more indispensable limb to Governor Dundas and his Council than he had been to Mr. Ramsay ; nor can they be blamed for making all the use they could of a subordinate of such unusual competence and of such astonishing capacity for work, especially if, as it would appear, they possessed little of either quality themselves. The Assistant Secretary was obliged, to begin with, to perform the duties of the Secretary owing to his protracted absence on leave ; so that, when in 1807 Mr. Pearson was elevated to a seat on the Council and Raffles became Secretary, it made no real difference except to his salary. The organisation of the new administration was mainly Raffles' work. He drew up the proclamations and the ordinances. He kept the records. He wrote the dispatches to the Court of Directors. " Scarce a letter has gone out, however trifling," he writes to a friend at home, " that I have not drafted, and I have not one right-hand man. . . . There is about three times the business in the Secretary's office as there is in England and not one-twentieth of the assistance." Owing to his knowledge of the language, he was appointed official Malay Translator. And, as if all this were not enough, when a new court of justice was established he undertook—there was no one else to do it—the function of Registrar. No wonder that Governor Macalister wrote home of Mr. Raffles' " unwearied zeal and assiduity." No wonder that, when Raffles was once, and once only, away from Penang for the sake of his health, the Governor should implore him to return—" we shall not be able to make up any dispatches for the Court without your assistance." And no wonder that Raffles' health had

given trouble. In those days Penang was quite falsely supposed to be exceptionally salubrious. "The operation of the climate," it was said, "is almost infallible." It certainly was. In a short period, to quote the *Memoir*, it "proved fatal to two Governors, all the Council, and many of the settlers." And Raffles, suffering all the time from overwork, did not escape untouched. In his first three years at Penang he had two serious illnesses, of the second of which he nearly died. "I am convinced," he writes in 1808, "my health will never permit my holding this office many years. . . . The fatigue of merely writing this letter gives me excruciating pain. . . . I am afraid they will work the willing horse to death."

But that second illness was a blessing in disguise. It forced Raffles to take a holiday and to spend some months in the slightly better climate of Malacca. And this not only improved Raffles' health: it plucked him from the web of multitudinous administrative business at Penang in which he had almost choked himself, and set him free for a space to look beyond his little settlement at the world around it. With instant zeal—for to Raffles a holiday meant anything but idleness—he began to extend his Malayan researches into the unexplored land round Malacca. At Penang, besides continuing to study the details of the language until his doctor positively forbade it, he had compiled a code of Malay laws. And now, at Malacca, he worked at a history of the Malay people, reading all the additional written materials now available, examining the natives of this district as he had those of his own on their old traditions, questioning as before the native traders from the islands who called at the port on their way up and down the Straits. His general conclusion, which he embodied in a paper "On the Malayu nation with a translation of its maritime institutions" and submitted to the Asiatic Society at Calcutta, was that the Malays were a single people, speaking one tongue, spread over the whole

of the great archipelago which divides the Pacific from the Indian Ocean and links Asia with Australia. Nor was it only his linguistic and ethnographical studies that were widened by those months of freedom. It happened that, at that moment, the political fate of Malacca as a European settlement was under discussion. No visitor could ignore the question. No one so alert and open-minded as Raffles could fail to form opinions of his own about it. And so, almost unawares, he was caught up in a current of politics that ran faster and farther than the backwaters of Penang and was presently to carry him out into the great world-stream of the Napoleonic War.

3

FOUNDED at the opening of the seventeenth century within two years of one another, the English and the Dutch East India Companies began their career as deadly rivals. They both concentrated at the outset on the Spice Islands or Moluccas in the heart of the Malayan Archipelago. And since the Dutch had already expelled the Portuguese from that area and established themselves in their place, they regarded the English as interlopers, obstructed their trade by all means in their power, and finally, after a bitter struggle which culminated in the brutal tragedy at Amboyna in 1623, succeeded in eliminating English trade throughout the islands. And there the conflict virtually ended. There was little further clash between the Companies : there was no fighting for sole possession of the field. And the reason was simple. The scope of the Eastern trade was so vast, so inexhaustibly vast ; and the English merchants, driven aside to continental Asia, discovered, as they pushed their operations ever deeper inland from their "factories" on the coast, that Indian trade, so far from being, as had been supposed, altogether inferior to that of the Spice Islands, was big enough to employ all and more than all their energy and capital. And meanwhile the Dutch merchants, though at one time they held a strong position in India, found in the end that it paid them better to concentrate on their monopoly of the insular field, with its outpost in Ceylon and its homeward port of call at Cape Town. Their hold on the continent relaxed and was finally broken by the loss of Chinsura in Bengal. Thenceforward the two companies could work side by side without feeling any serious competition. There was room for both ; and they had marked out, so to speak, their separate "spheres of in-

fluence." But there was one point at which these continental and insular spheres touched and overlapped—the point at which the most westerly of the Malayan islands impinges on the south-eastern corner of the Asiatic continent. And this point, as it happened, was of supreme importance in the strategy of the Far Eastern trade. For through the Malacca Straits between Sumatra and the Malay Peninsula lay one of the two shortest and safest routes to Siam and China and Japan. The other gateway to the Farther East was the Sunda Straits between Sumatra and Java. Both were narrow—the Malacca Straits, at their narrowest, less than forty miles wide, the Sunda Straits less than twenty. So a nation which occupied both sides or even one side of either of them could easily prevent, if it desired, the merchant ships of any other nation from sailing through. Just at this point, therefore, the old Anglo-Dutch rivalry never quite died away. The trading-posts of the two companies were interspersed. In Sumatra, which the Dutch, though they had never effectively occupied it, regarded like all the other islands as their preserve, the English had established themselves at Bencoolen on the rough west coast, with one or two small and temporary posts dependent on it. The Dutch, on the other hand, had encroached on the continent by their capture and retention of the Portuguese post at Malacca; and it was not till 1786 that the British approached the Malayan coast by the purchase of Penang from the local Sultan. In 1800 they extended their foothold to the adjacent mainland by the similar acquisition of Province Wellesley.

But between 1786 and 1800 the political situation in the Far East, as in many other quarters of the world, had been transformed by the effects of the great convulsion in Europe. In 1794 the French revolutionary armies occupied Holland, and from thence onwards the Dutch Republic, though still nominally independent, was practically a pawn of France. In the East Indies, therefore, every Dutch post

was now equivalent to a French post, a refuge for French warships or a base for French attacks on British trade and territory. And when the forces of the French Revolution were commandeered by Napoleon, this Eastern danger grew with the growth of his power and his dreams. He tightened the French grip on Holland. In 1801 he forced a new constitution on the impotent republic, designed to keep it more firmly under his command ; in 1806 he converted it into a monarchy with his brother Louis on the throne. Finally, in 1810, he discarded all pretences, and, deposing Louis, annexed Holland to France. And all the time, of course, he was planning to use the Dutch possessions overseas for his one paramount purpose, the overthrow of Britain. The idea of achieving that purpose by seizing India and destroying British commerce in the East had early entered his mind and never left it. In 1797 he warned the Directory that Egypt must soon be occupied as the first stage on the road to India ; and in the following year he led the "Army of the East," which he called "a wing of the Army of England," to Egypt and Syria. But before he could proceed further with his grandiose plan for an overland march through Asia, the situation at home compelled his return to France, and for some years he was preoccupied with Europe. In 1803, however, he began to resuscitate his oriental project. In 1805 he declared that the "Army of England," baffled at Boulogne, should become "the Army of the East and go to Egypt." In 1808, now near the zenith of his power, he proposed that a combined force of French, Russians and Austrians should march to India—"nothing is so easy as this operation," he strangely said. To prepare the way, he had concluded, in 1807, a treaty with the Shah of Persia, binding the latter to break off relations with the British, to stir up the Afghans against India, and to give a French army free passage through his country, and he had followed this up by the dispatch to Persia of twenty-four French officers and 300 men as an "advance guard."

So much for the continental side of the great design—more dangerous to British India in appearance, perhaps, than in reality. But, since France was, like Britain, an amphibious power, there was also a maritime side. In the islands of Mauritius and Bourbon France had long possessed useful bases for naval attacks on India and Indian trade. To these the subjugation of Holland added the Cape of Good Hope, Ceylon, and the Malayan Archipelago. Napoleon, in fact, had obtained a stranglehold on the Indian Ocean. But the British Government, well aware of the danger, struck quickly. Within a year of Holland's overthrow both the Cape and Ceylon as well as Malacca were seized, and the encircling chain was broken. There remained, however, Mauritius and Bourbon, on the west, both strengthened now against attack, and on the east, nearer and more threatening, the Malayan islands. In 1797 Daendels, an able and ruthless Dutch Jacobin who had become a general in the French army, had suggested an assault on India from a base in Java, the centre and stronghold of the Dutch administration; and, if the Dutch fleet had not been crippled at Camperdown, this project might well have been carried out in concurrence with Napoleon's invasion of Egypt. The idea, in any case, lingered in Napoleon's mind; and when, four years later, he began to reconstruct his plans for the march through Asia, he sent Daendels, now a Marshal, to Java to strengthen its defences, reorganise the Dutch colonial troops, and await the moment for a descent on India. Again the danger was obvious, and again the British navy, with Nelson's captains in command, was not idle. In 1806 and 1807 two Dutch squadrons were caught on the Java coast and destroyed; and in 1808 the Moluccas, the very Spice Islands themselves, were occupied. In 1810 Mauritius and Bourbon were captured by an expedition dispatched from India by Lord Minto, who had gone out to Bengal as Governor-General in 1807. Only one link remained in Napoleon's chain—Java. And on

the capture of Java, though for a time he held his hand in doubt as to the Home Government's intentions, Lord Minto had set his mind from the first.

The coasts and seas of Malaya had thus become a not unimportant field of the world war when, in 1808, Raffles visited Malacca and learned to his astonishment that, at this moment of all moments, the Directors at the India House had determined to abandon it. The new presidency of Penang was to be the only British settlement on the Straits. Malacca as a trading-post was to be virtually destroyed. The massive old fort was to be demolished ; the commercial and industrial part of the native population persuaded to migrate to Penang ; and the place thus reduced to a derelict Malayan village. When Raffles arrived, the first step in the execution of this policy had already been taken. The fort was gone. The ordnance and stores had been removed to Penang. But every day that Raffles stayed at Malacca, the more mistaken the policy seemed, until at last he resolved to do what he could to prevent or postpone further action. It was no business of his. A young and obscure official might well think twice before he ventured to intrude an unsolicited opinion on a matter of high policy at the India House : he might well despair of exercising any influence over the Directors' counsels. But Raffles was not the man to be deterred by such considerations. At the close of his holiday he sat down and drafted a minute—clear, concise, and overwhelming in force of argument—and presented it as a personal report on Malacca to his own local Government. The Directors' policy, he argued in the first place, was impracticable. It hinged on the migration of a great part of the native population at Malacca, and by nothing short of force could those natives be impelled to migrate. The town was not a mushroom growth, nor its people wanderers. Three-quarters of them were born there, and their families had been rooted there for centuries. "Attached to the place from their birth,

they are accustomed to the local regulations ; and in the bosom of their family feel that they are at home. . . . From the antiquity and former celebrity of the place it follows that the country is well cultivated and that valuable buildings, public and private, have been erected by the inhabitants. . . . It is no common advantage that will induce them to quit the tombs of their ancestors, the temples sacred to the Deity, their independence and estates on which they depend for their livelihood and respectability. . . . The present population must therefore be considered as attached to the soil ; and from every appearance it seems they have determined to remain by Malacca, let its fate be what it will. . . . The offer made by the Government of paying the passage of such as would embark for Penang was not accepted by a single individual." So much for the project of migration. But, if the natives stayed, could the British go ? And here appears the first concrete expression of Raffles' protective attitude towards the Malays. It seems to him impossible to desert the people of Malacca merely to strengthen the commercial position of Penang. "The natives," he wrote, "consider the British faith as pledged for their protection. When the settlement fell into the hands of the English, they were invited to remain ; protection and even encouragement were offered them. The latter has long ago ceased ; and they are in daily expectation of losing the former." And then he descends to an argument better calculated, perhaps, to carry weight at the India House. "For our protection they are willing to make great sacrifices ; and they pay the heavy duties imposed on them with the cheerfulness of faithful and obedient subjects. The revenues of Malacca are never in arrear." And there were other material arguments. Malacca was a more natural trading centre than Penang ; and, unlike Penang, it lay where the Straits were narrowest. Dismantled and deserted by the British, it would soon be reoccupied and refortified by others. "The possession of Malacca will ever be a most

desirable object to a European power. . . . Every ship that passes up or down must be observed from it, and should this station ever be held by an enterprising enemy, not only Penang but the more important China trade would be materially endangered." But supposing, on the other hand, Britain retains her hold on Malacca . . . The thought tempts Raffles to a first, brief, tentative disclosure of his great idea, his dream. The masters of the Malacca gate might become in time the masters of Malaya. With the assistance of Malacca, he declares in his last paragraph, all the Malay rajahs to the eastward might be brought under British control.

This report was a remarkable performance. Still more remarkable, it achieved its object. It was duly forwarded by the Penang Government to the India House, and the Court of Directors, unable to withstand its trenchant logic, at once decided to reverse their policy. "This document," wrote those eminent men of business, "has in so comprehensive a manner laid open to our view the present circumstances of the settlement at Malacca and the dangers which may arise by the total abandonment of it that we agree as a temporary measure to the continuance of the present establishment there—and the more readily [they characteristically add] as we find . . . that the charges, including every possible contingency, are fully provided for by the revenues of the place." As for Raffles, he is to be commended in the grand official manner. "You will communicate to that gentleman that we entertain a favourable sense of the talents he has evinced upon that occasion." Thus, in a moment, the young civil servant had emerged from the obscurity of a minor colonial secretariat. Alone and on his own initiative, he had saved the British hold on Malacca; and he had done it by laying bare certain hard facts as to the strategy of trade and politics in that marginal area of the East Indies. Nor could the Directors miss, though most of them might shut their eyes

to it, the wider and more positive policy that lay beneath the surface of Raffles' report. Quite apart from the little hint at its close, it pointed beyond the immediate problem of Malacca. It pointed forward. It pointed east and south. A gateway is plainly not a *cul-de-sac*.

4

THE Report on Malacca had attracted attention in other quarters than the India House. Two years before Raffles came to Penang, there had also come East, as an assistant surgeon in the Company's service, a scholarly, capable, uncouth, self-made Scot who might long have been forgotten by posterity if he had not figured as a friend of Sir Walter's in Lockhart's unforgettable biography. Administration in India was scarcely John Leyden's natural *métier* ; but, whatever he did, that remarkable man was certain to succeed, and all the more certain when the head of the Government he served was an Elliot from his own Scottish dale. Lord Minto at once recognised his ability and learned to prize his fast-acquired knowledge of the East. "A perfect Malay," he called him, and he devoted one of his private letters home to a detailed account of the "stupendous learning" and the other virtues of "so distinguished a worthy of Teviotside." So Leyden was soon climbing the official ladder in Bengal and acting as one of Lord Minto's most useful confidential advisers ; and thus, when he chanced to visit Penang in 1805 and there fell in with young Raffles and found in him, as in nobody else he had met in the East, a passionate interest akin to his own in oriental peoples and their life and languages, and so struck up a swift and cordial friendship, the requisite link had been forged between the Secretary at Penang and the Governor-General at Calcutta. Lord Minto soon learned that in Raffles his Government possessed another Leyden, another official who knew all about the mysterious archipelago over which his own thoughts were always hovering, another "perfect Malay." When the Moluccas were captured in 1808, he even entertained the idea,

though it came to nothing, of appointing Raffles to take temporary charge of them. And when a copy of the Malacca Report, wisely sent by Raffles to Leyden, was put before him, he instantly approved of it—"A most useless piece of gratuitous mischief," he exclaimed, of the destruction of the Malacca fort—and he warmly supported its arguments in a dispatch to the Court of Directors. "He desired me to say," wrote Leyden to Raffles, "he should be gratified in receiving immediately from yourself any communications respecting the Eastern parts of a similar nature." This welcome letter reached Raffles towards the end of 1809, when rumours were abroad of Lord Minto's intention to attempt the capture of Mauritius and Bourbon. If it should succeed, what next? What of Java and his dream of a British hegemony over all the rajahs of Malaya? At such a moment, when such decisions were impending, to be imprisoned in Penang, more than a thousand miles away from any one who could influence the course of history, was intolerably irksome to Raffles' eager, ambitious spirit. His status at Penang, moreover, had begun to gall him. He felt restive—and the feeling was presently to become habitual—under the authority of official superiors who were, it was obvious, less competent and well-informed than himself. He resented being treated as the humble servant of the Government when, in actual fact, he was something like its master. "A Secretary," he wrote home at the end of 1808, "is in general the organ, but in some places the very soul. I am neither the one nor the other. . . . You may therefore guess the situation. . . . The arrogance that a temporary exaltation has given to some is scarce to be borne with except by such a patient body as me." And now perhaps the possibility of his removal from Penang was being discussed at Calcutta. Nothing, it seemed, had yet been done about the Moluccas. Was he to go there or not? It was not easy to concentrate on his official routine with all this uncertainty hanging over him; and soon he could

stand it no longer. In June, 1810, he took leave, and in a small and dangerously frail sailing ship set out across the Bay of Bengal for Calcutta.

Lord Minto was delighted at Raffles' sudden arrival, though he was obliged to tell him that the appointment to the Moluccas had now been promised to another. But to Raffles as to Lord Minto the Moluccas were a minor issue ; and the young official promptly took occasion to observe that there were other islands worth the Governor-General's attention—Java, for instance. "On the mention of Java," he wrote, years afterwards, "his Lordship cast a look of such scrutiny, anticipation and kindness upon me that I shall never forget. 'Yes,' said he, 'Java is an interesting island. I shall be happy to receive any information you can give me concerning it.' This was enough to encourage me, and from this moment all my views, all my plans, and all my mind were devoted to create such an interest regarding Java as should lead to its annexation to our Eastern Empire." It was not unnatural, perhaps, for Raffles to suppose that it was he who had planted the idea of the conquest of Java in Lord Minto's mind ; but, in truth, Lord Minto had scarcely ceased to think of it from the day he was appointed Governor-General. It was an essential part of a single plan—the British counter to Napoleon's designs for the encirclement of India. First, Bourbon ; next, Mauritius ; then Java. And, at about the time of the conversation recorded above, the news of the surrender of Bourbon (July 8, 1810) had already reached Calcutta. Mauritius fell on December 2 ; but, long before that, Lord Minto was counting on the success of his second stroke and beginning to plan the third. His difficulty was that nobody knew anything about the Malayan world—nobody but Leyden and that young official at Penang. Hence his satisfaction at Raffles' unexpected arrival and at his interest, not so unexpected, in Java. Lord Minto at once determined to fit him into his plan—to set him, indeed, at its very forefront. In October,

1810, he appointed him "Agent to the Governor-General with the Malay States," "as an *avant-courier* and to prepare the way for the expedition." Raffles was to select his own headquarters and he chose Malacca. In December he was back there, no longer an overworked minor civilian on sick leave from Penang, but a high official, entrusted with wide authority and with a task big enough, surely, for that insatiable ambition.

In his execution of that task Raffles must have exceeded even Lord Minto's expectations. The Agent-General at Malacca was soon displaying the same enormous capacity for work which had distinguished the clerk at the India House and the secretary at Penang. Within three or four months he had drafted a series of invaluable reports, providing a mass of detailed information (much of it never available before) about not Java only, but Borneo, Celebes, Banka, most of the Archipelago in fact; about the tribes that inhabited them, their rulers and their character; about their products, their various spices and their minerals; about the methods of the Dutch trade and its slight hold on all this wealth of raw materials, and the absence of any other trade; about the prospect of opening up commercial relations through the islands with Japan; about the prevalence of piracy in those seas and the slave trade and the American traffic in arms; about Islam and Christian missions, and so forth—a veritable encyclopædia. And that was not all. Since the capture of Java would mean the transference of the whole of this island world from Dutch control to British, he sketched the main lines of the policy which a British administration should pursue. As regards Java, at any rate, this policy was in the main to be adopted and its examination may be deferred. One interesting suggestion, however, which was not put into effect, may be mentioned here. In his researches into Malayan history Raffles had discovered that in ancient times all the Malay sultans and rajahs, while independent sovereigns within

their own territories, had owned a kind of feudal allegiance to a "superior or suzerain," who "had the title of Bitara." He suggested that this title, "equivalent to Lord Protector," should be resurrected and that the Malay chiefs should be prevailed upon—it was important that it should "seem to be their spontaneous and voluntary act"—to bestow it on the Governor-General of India, who would then be invested with "a general right of superintendence over and interference with all the Malay states, which might be acted upon when circumstances should render it necessary." Raffles, in fact, not for the last time, was anticipating history. He was suggesting a form of control, the Protectorate, which was in course of years to be widely adopted and to prove of great utility not only in Malaya but in tropical Africa and other backward areas of the British Empire. And by protection Raffles meant protection, not exploitation in disguise. His dream of a British East Indies, which now, it seemed, was suddenly on the point of coming true, had appealed to him, as has been observed, not merely nor mainly because it meant a great expansion of British trade but also because it meant, at least to him, a safer, happier, better life for the native peoples of Malaya. At the close of his last long report he says, "I have now only to congratulate your Lordship on the most splendid prospect which any administration has beheld since our first acquisition of India: the pacification of India completed, the tranquillity and prosperity of our Eastern possessions secured, the total expulsion of the European enemy from the Eastern Seas, and the justice, humanity and moderation of the British government as much exemplified in fostering and leading on new races of subjects and allies in the cause of improvement as in the undaunted courage and resolution of British soldiers in rescuing them from oppression."

This last report is dated June 10, 1811; and, a month before that, on May 9, Lord Minto had himself arrived at Malacca. He had decided, to the consternation of the

official *clique* at Calcutta, to take the lead in person of the Java expedition. He had decided, too, that Raffles was to be his "right-hand man." In February he had written to inform him that, "Mauritius and all the French islands being now in our possession, there is nothing to retard our further views to the eastward," and to take him into his confidence as to the size and objects of the expedition. "It is proposed," he announced in a second letter, "to style you Secretary to the Governor-General when we come together. . . . Secretary is the highest office below the Council. . . . I hope you do not doubt the *prospective* interest I have always taken, and do not cease to take, in your personal views and welfare." Then follow some vague sentences about the difficulty of promising appointments on which other authorities have to be consulted ; and then—"I am happy to say that I do not expect an obstacle to my very strong desire on this point ; and if it should occur, the utmost will be done to make the *best attainable situation* worthy of your services and of the high esteem I profess, with the greatest sincerity, for your person." A clear intimation of the Governor-General's entire satisfaction with Raffles' execution of his task at Malacca. And an intimation, not so clear, of a yet higher post awaiting him.

But Raffles was too busy to wonder overmuch what the future had in store. He had his reports to finish, and, now as always, every spare moment was filled with his literary and scientific pursuits. During these months he contributed a paper to *Asiatic Researches*, a periodical edited by another Malay scholar, William Marsden, who had recently served in Bengal ; and, soon after Lord Minto's arrival, a meeting was held, with the Governor-General in the chair, of the Malacca branch of the Asiatic Society. For yet other moments in those hectic days there was the business of marrying off two of his sisters in succession, one to a naval officer, the other to a civil surgeon at Madras. But before long Raffles' whole mind, and Lord Minto's too, was

occupied with a question on which the whole fate of the expedition might depend. The Dutch monopoly of the Malayan Archipelago had been only too effective. The British sailors did not know their way about it. Of one thing only they were certain: the approach to Java was very dangerous, especially for a cumbrous fleet of transports and their escort. As to the direct route through the Karimata Straits, every one agreed it was impossible. The alternative, on the other hand, was a very lengthy route—north-eastwards from the bottom of the Malay Peninsula, right round the northern coasts of huge Borneo, and so at last to Java from the north-east. If that route were adopted, the expedition could not sail till next year: for Java would be swamped by the autumn rains before the British troops could reach it. It was an intolerable dilemma, all the more intolerable because the choice seemed to depend on hearsay rather than on knowledge. But knowledge, personal knowledge, Raffles, true to character, determined to have. On his own authority he dispatched a Captain Greigh to attempt the direct route in his own ship and report results. The results were excellent. "The report of Mr. Greigh," wrote Raffles to Lord Minto, "sufficiently establishes the practicability of the Karimata passage." So, since Lord Minto was prepared to trust Raffles and the man whom Raffles trusted, the direct route was decided on. In successive divisions the great fleet of 100 ships, of which fifty-seven were transports bearing nearly 11,000 troops, sailed from Malacca. The first division left on June 11. On June 18 Lord Minto and Raffles embarked on H.M.S. *Modeste*. Before long the swift frigate had caught up the straggling fleet and taken the lead. On July 29 the Governor-General and his Principal Secretary were in sight of Java.

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THE leading members of the expedition approached their goal with varied feelings. Sir Samuel Auchmuty, the general in command of the troops, was doubtless mainly thinking of the fighting ahead, of striking a blow in this far island at the great enemy who seemed so unassailable in Europe. And for Lord Minto, too, the capture of Java was primarily a stroke of war, the last stroke in his campaign for the destruction of French power in the Indian Ocean and the safety of the British position in India and of the merchantmen bearing the sinews of war to England. But in Lord Minto's mind there was another thought ; and in Raffles' mind this thought was uppermost. They felt themselves to be coming to Java and the island-world around it as deliverers.

It has always been easy for Englishmen, conscious of their long and wide experience in the government of native races, to suppose that they are better qualified for the task than any other people. But with regard to Dutch rule in Java and in the year 1811 such an assumption was defensible. The British record, it is true, was by no means clean. It was only in 1807, only four years before, that Britain had ceased at long last to take her share, the lion's share, in what must be regarded as the greatest crime ever committed by the white races against a coloured race—the slave trade. It was not half a century since the natives of Bengal had suffered from all the evils inherent in a system of government in which power was dissociated from responsibility. And not far from Java itself, on the coast of Sumatra, the agents of the British East India Company had (as will be seen) adopted similar methods to those of the Dutch, though on a very much smaller scale. But if those things were un-

deniably written on recent pages of the British record, it is no less undeniable that a new page had now been turned. With the almost unanimous approval of the British parliament and people the British slave trade had been for ever abolished ; and long before that, with Clive's last administration, with the reforms of Warren Hastings, and with the enactment of Pitt's India Bill, the purification and amendment of British government in India had begun ; and, fostered by Burke's passionate philanthropy, this process had steadily continued, till now, in 1811, not in its ideals only but in its practice, the British government in India could be described, not unfairly nor hypocritically, as an efficient, just and humane government. On the other hand, the Dutch government of Java at that date—it is no less certain—was neither efficient, nor just, nor humane.

The government was still entirely controlled by the Dutch East India Company, and its sole object was still the production of the greatest possible commercial profit. To that end it had, in the first place, secured an absolute monopoly of the spice trade. European rivals had been excluded from the archipelago, the natives had been forbidden to trade with any but the Dutch, and strong measures had been employed to enforce this decree. The native shipping of Java, which had hitherto ranged far and wide among the islands, had been confined to the Java coast trade on pain of confiscation. Beyond the limits of effective supervision by Dutch officials, illicit trading had been punished by the destruction of all the local spice-trees. In one case, that of the Banda Islands, the recalcitrant natives had been exterminated. These methods had been ultimately successful. Some smuggling still persisted, but in general the native trade was crushed. The islanders sold their spices only to the Dutch and at the Dutch price. Secondly, in order to maintain high prices in Europe, the Dutch had limited production. Besides the uprooting of trees, crops had sometimes been destroyed as they stood and great

quantities of spice burned or buried. So much for the economic side of Dutch government. Its administrative side was no better. Like its British rival in India, the Dutch Company had found itself obliged to assume some measure of territorial control in the neighbourhood of its chief commercial settlement. But it had shrunk, even longer than the British, from direct administration. In 1811 the actual government of Java, except in the district round Batavia (the headquarters of the Dutch Governor), was still mainly in the hands of the native princes or regents ; but Dutch Residents were stationed at their courts to supervise them, and they were bound not only to pay a proportion of the yield of their subjects' labour to the Company, but also, when required, to see that their subjects grew the crops which the Company needed. In areas directly controlled by the Company, the natives were sometimes compelled to sell the whole of the crops to the Company at a low price and to buy back what they wanted for nearly twice as much. From this system the Company, the Regents, and the corrupt agents they employed were the only gainers. The natives paid twice over—first to the Regents or the native landlords, and then to the Company. They were obliged, moreover, to perform various feudal services for the Regents and to work for the Company on making roads and bridges, on irrigation, on building courts and prisons and other public works, and on transporting the Company's servants and stores about the country. Clearly, under such a system, the pious exhortations of the Directors in Holland that the natives should be well treated could have but small effect. "The Dutch came without question," says an American student of European colonisation, "to regard the native as simply one of the factors entering into the making of money, a factor to be treated in the same objective way as water, soil, or any other non-sentient or inanimate element." Nor, finally, could it be pleaded that at least these ruthless economic and administrative methods had

achieved their purpose. The finances of the Company, after a great boom in its earlier years, had steadily declined, not only because the economic system was vicious and short-sighted in itself, but because it was inefficiently and corruptly administered. Ill-chosen to begin with, the Company's officials were miserably paid; and so, like the British officials at one time in Bengal, they "made their fortunes," as a Dutch Director-General confessed, "at the expense of the master whom they served"—and of the natives. They engaged in smuggling. They created local monopolies of their own in the vital commodity of rice. "Overweights and short payments," says the Dutch historian, Van Deventer, "in every form and in every branch of delivery and management, served the officials as an ample compensation for what the Government withheld from them." From time to time, high-minded Governors and other officials had protested and pleaded for reform; but nothing effective had been done.

So bad indeed was the general situation in Java at the end of the eighteenth century that a Dutch Commission, appointed to report on it in 1790, decided that "they could not fix their thoughts upon it without being affected by sentiments of horror and detestation." Since then, it is true, drastic reforms had been decided on, and Daendels, the "Iron Marshal," aided by his keen Dutch lieutenant, Muntinghe, had begun to carry them out. Having forcibly pacified the interior, he had overhauled the machine of government, provided regular salaries, stamped out official corruption, and diverted the flow of wealth from private pockets to the coffers of the Government. Raffles himself paid a notable tribute to these reforms. "A much more regular, active, pure and efficient administration," he declared, "was established in this island by Marshal Daendels than ever existed before in any period of the Dutch Company." In truth, however, Daendels had left the greatest evils untouched. Worse, he had given them Government

sanction. The money to pay the officials' salaries came from the same source as their old illicit fortunes—from the unhappy natives. The Regents were left with unchecked powers of over-taxation. The old abuses of compulsory deliveries and labour were wholly unredressed. Indeed, so far from lightening the burden, Daendels had suddenly introduced a new form of economic tyranny. Ignoring the fact that, as long as the war lasted, the European market was barred to all Javanese products old or new, he had ordained that a great part of the whole native population should be set to cultivating coffee. Thus the Marshal's administration had not proved an unmixed blessing for the Javanese ; and it had been very costly. The provision of new coffee plants, together with heavy expenditure on defence and public buildings, had so taxed the treasury that, not for the first time, paper money had been issued, which, despite Daendels' characteristic decree that it was to be accepted at its face value, had inevitably and rapidly depreciated. When General Janssens took Daendels' place in 1810, he complained that his predecessor had " exhausted all the resources " of the colony. The Dutch administration, in fact, was virtually bankrupt. And that was not the only price to be paid for Daendels' " reforms." His methods of repression and his enforcement of coffee cultivation had bitterly alienated the natives. If Lord Minto needed confirmation for his designs, he could find it—perhaps he did—in a report from the British Resident at Bencoolen that " the natives are disgusted with the Dutch in Java and would willingly side with the English in expelling them." Nor were the Dutch residents much better pleased with a Napoleonic master who brooked no opposition and banished or imprisoned his critics at will. If this was what French hegemony meant, they began to ask themselves, might not British rule be preferable? . . .

" The English come as friends," declared Lord Minto

to the natives of Java in a proclamation published at the moment of landing. But there was a risk that these words might be belied and the future relations between the British and the Javanese distorted and inflamed at their first contact by such acts as conquering armies, in heat of blood, have often enough committed, especially, perhaps, when the conquered have been "heathen folk." It was a real danger, and Raffles had foreseen it. He had told Lord Minto that the troops, both British and Indian, regarded the Malays as a detestable race of pirates, cut-throats and traitors. "These sentiments in the minds of our soldiers," he wrote, "will not naturally tend to induce a line of conduct on their part calculated to convey to the natives of Java any strong impression either of our justice or humanity." Due warning had accordingly been given, and the results were admirable. Lord Minto was soon writing to his wife of "the exemplary behaviour of the troops who paid their way and did not even kiss an old woman without her consent." And again : "You see the trees laden with coconuts and plantains, acres of onions, cabbage, and many tempting things, not one taken, nor the slightest offence given to a single inhabitant."

Meantime Batavia had been occupied without bloodshed, since the enemy had decided to withdraw to a well-fortified position, seven miles inland, at Cornelis. Daendels had boasted of organising an army 17,000 strong ; but Janssens reported, after the event, that he had only been able to muster at Cornelis about 8,000 effectives under arms. Of these, over 2,000 were European troops, including a battalion of French *voltigeurs* : the rest were natives, trained and officered by Europeans. The British, on the other hand, their numbers already diminished by sickness since the expedition left Malacca, had about 9,000 men ; but, since more than half were British regulars, General Auchmuty did not hesitate to take the offensive. On August 10, the British army, gallantly led by Colonel

Gillespie, attacked and carried an advance entrenchment of the enemy. On August 26, by a frontal assault under heavy fire, it drove them from their main position at Cornelis. The British casualties were 633, including over fifty officers. The Franco-Dutch army was practically wiped out. At least 2,000 were killed or wounded. More than 5,000 were made prisoners. General Janssen escaped into the interior with a mere handful of cavalry. Thus virtually ended a notable, though now a little-known, campaign in the annals of the British army. And there was one feature of it which Lord Minto, who was present at both actions, recorded with special pride. "The humanity of the men to their wounded prisoners on that day," he wrote of August 10, "was admirable. No distinction of colour on that occasion. Our soldiers picked up English, Dutch and Malay, without distinction, in the jungle and carried them with great labour to the hospital"—a work, it may be added, in which Lord Minto himself assisted. "The Malays and other native troops," he continues, "are all in amazement, having been made to believe that we are savages and should treat them with all sorts of barbarities if they fell into our hands."

That the people of Java were indeed, for good or ill, in British hands was now certain. The battle of Cornelis had determined the mastery of the island. It was impossible for Janssens, who, as it chanced, had been forced five years earlier to surrender the Cape of Good Hope to the British, to evade the repetition of his fate. On September 18, he signed the capitulation.

And now came the second and the harder task—to construct an efficient British government on the fragments of the Dutch—a task which was overshadowed from the outset by one great uncertainty. The British held Java, but who could tell how long they would continue to hold it? The merchants at the India House had no doubts

about it. Their intention had been merely to extirpate a rival Dutch commercial centre. Their explicit orders to Lord Minto were "to subdue the Dutch Government, to destroy the fortifications, to distribute the ordnance, arms and military stores amongst the native chiefs and inhabitants, and then to retire from the country." But this was never Lord Minto's intention, nor Raffles'. In the first place, it was stupid strategy. To evacuate the island was to invite re-entry at the first opportunity by the French. And, secondly, it was stark inhumanity. In every little town in which Dutch traders or planters were congregated, they would be at once exposed, without any troops to protect them, to the savagery of the people whom they had taught to hate them, whilst the island as a whole, released from all European control, would revert to an age of barbarous internecine war. On these grounds Raffles had insisted, before the conquest, that a subsequent evacuation was unthinkable, and Lord Minto had entirely agreed. To obey the Directors' orders, he afterwards declared, was "absolutely, because morally, impossible." One day Java might be safely left to itself, but not yet. "The exclusion of European masters from Java," he wrote to Robert Dundas early in October, "is impossible in the present state of things. To make them richer, happier, and to give the people itself a feeling of independence, which they are now totally without, would be the best receipt for making their country less accessible to European invaders. But in our times this cannot be looked to, and the Government we have established must instantly be replaced by the French whenever it is withdrawn." Lord Minto, in fact, had long determined—and in those days before the telegraph cable Governors-General could take such risks—to ignore the wishes of his merchant chiefs at home. But there were others in London he could not ignore—the diplomatists. Already the news of the Peninsula campaign had awakened hopes in Englishmen's hearts all round the world. A

victorious end to the endless war might be soon at last in sight. And then the fate of Java would be settled not by the aspirations of a Minto or a Raffles but by high politics in Europe; and the interests of the Javanese would inevitably rank second, if they ranked at all, to the requirements of European concord and stability. "All that I fear," said Lord Minto in his letter to Dundas, "is the general peace." But even that cramping uncertainty could be no argument for evacuation or inaction now. It "ought not surely to prevent us from beginning to perform the first duty of Governments in improving the condition of a people that has become tributary to our authority and tributary to our prosperity." To take so strong a line on his own initiative, to commit the Company and the British Government to the costly experiment of a regular annexation and occupation of Java, was clearly to risk official disapproval, coldness, possibly disgrace. But no such reckonings could dim Lord Minto's ardour. He cared nothing for rewards, he said, if he were "happy enough . . . to witness a substantial amelioration in the condition of the five millions who inhabit this beautiful country or even a tendency to that result from the foundations I shall have laid."

So the decision to remain in Java was taken. It had indeed been taken long ago. But, if the Governor-General could lay the foundations of good government by principle and precept, he could not build it up himself. Already he had been long away from India. Chafing officials and a mounting heap of uncompleted documents were waiting in Calcutta. It was high time for Lord Minto to return to his desk. And he could go with an easy mind. He could leave the building to hands which he knew were guided by the same ideas and the same ideals as his own. On September 11, a week before the actual capitulation, he carried out the design he had formed in the days when the Java expedition was still in preparation and issued to Raffles, "in

acknowledgment of the services he had rendered and in consideration of his peculiar fitness for the office," a commission to act as "Lieutenant Governor of Java and its dependencies." Then followed five weeks of profuse and intimate discussion between the Governor-General and his delegate. On October 19, Lord Minto sailed for Bengal. "While we are in Java," he said to Raffles before he left, "let us do all the good we can."

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THE young Governor first set himself to establish peaceful and friendly relations with the population he now ruled. The conciliation of the Dutch colonists proved easy enough. Lord Minto's proclamation on landing had appealed to them to recognise the British as the true friends of their captive homeland. "England has in every period, sometimes single and alone, been the champion and defender of Europe, the hope of those whose fate was not yet consummated, the refuge and consolation of the fallen." And in another proclamation, issued on September 11, the Dutch had been promised the same status before the law, the same trading facilities, the same eligibility for office under the new Government as Englishmen. To these wise overtures the Dutch at once responded. The sentiments of the colonial community as a whole, as has been noticed, had been severely strained by Daendels' administration. "Il paraît certain," wrote Janssens in a confidential report to his Government, "que tous, tant Européens qu'indigènes, ont désiré voir passer la colonie entre les mains de l'ennemi. On attribuera cela à une détestable anglomanie, tandis que ce n'était que le souhait ardent de voir finir une administration qui désolait tout le monde." An exaggeration, doubtless ; but, probably, with a good deal of truth in it. For the Dutch, it must be remembered, all these years, were divided into two parties ; and some, at least, of the minority, who had supported the House of Orange, if they were not positive anglomaniacs, yet recognised in England the champion of that House and of their national freedom. Naturally, therefore, the Dutch colonists of this Orange faction had hoped that the East Indies would at least be able to maintain neutrality and had bitterly resented their being used as one more instrument for Napoleon's world

ambitions. As to the Republican and pro-French party, the best of its "patriots" could have no illusions as to the possibility of reversing the decision of Cornelis as long as the British command of the sea prevented the arrival of reinforcements from Europe. A far more practical, a far more immediate question was whether they were to be deserted to the dreaded vengeance of the natives. And, since the British were their only available protectors, since a British government was their only safeguard against revolt and massacre, they wanted, for the time being at any rate, to keep the British in Java, not to turn them out. They might hope, one day, at the end of the war, perhaps, to see the Dutch flag flying again at Batavia; but in the meantime it would be plainly impolitic not to make friends with the newcomers, and well-nigh suicidal to plot and scheme against them. Social relations, therefore, were quickly established. Many of the Dutch attended a dinner and a ball given by Raffles to Janssens and two other Dutch generals shortly before Lord Minto's departure. And Raffles was soon on the friendliest terms with the two able Dutchmen, Muntinghe and Cranssen, on his Council. The concord, indeed, was almost universal—almost, but not quite. The gallant Colonel Gillespie, the military member of Council, was uneasy. He scented "conspiracies and plots." But, as Raffles wrote to Lord Minto in January, 1812, it was "all without reason." "There is not among the Dutch the least symptom of dissension, and all classes of people have come most quietly under British rule. . . . As soon as it was known that the oaths might be taken, the public offices were crowded from morning till night with the inhabitants. . . . The late members of Council came forward in a body; and, after taking the oaths before me, I am sorry to add, got most jovially tipsy at my house in company with the new Councillors." The Dutch, in fact, were "perfectly content and happy."

The conciliation of the Javanese was a far graver problem. Even the "Iron Marshal" had not brought the whole of Java under Dutch control. Nearly half the island had never acknowledged the supremacy of the Dutch Government; and some of the native chiefs saw in the British conquest an opportunity of repudiating all foreign interference and authority. Swift and firm measures were needed to prevent the general unrest from growing into something like a general rebellion; and, at this first test, Raffles proved that the competent departmental official could also be a man of bold initiative and decisive action. He at once determined, in a manner which a not indiscriminating Dutch historian has applauded as "worthy of a statesman," that the basis of peace and order in Java must be a universal acceptance of British sovereignty throughout the island; and, in the third month of his office, he set out for the central and eastern districts to negotiate in person to that end with the two most powerful native rulers, the Sosohunan or Emperor of Java at Solo and the Sultan of Mataram at Jokjokarta. The interview with the former was quite satisfactory. The Emperor willingly signed a treaty, in which he accepted the overlordship of the British Government in return for a guarantee of his crown, his territories and his security. The Sultan was more formidable. Raffles was received with pomp and ceremony, and, as he drove through Jokjokarta, he observed that the roadway was crowded on either side by "about 10,000 armed men of various descriptions, mostly cavalry." But he faced the Sultan coolly, obtained from him a promise to obey the new Government, and confirmed him in his office. It seemed as if at least the foundations of a good understanding had been laid. In the following May, however, the Sultan broke loose and set himself at the head of a league of princes to drive the British out of Java. Raffles again acted promptly. Most of the British troops were away on an expedition to Sumatra; but he gathered what

force he could, about 1,200 men, marched on Jokjokarta, carried it by storm, seized and deposed the Sultan, and set his heir on the throne. All was over by mid-June. The league collapsed. The chiefs submitted. In a few weeks and with very little bloodshed British sovereignty had been established throughout the island. Thenceforward, during the whole of Raffles' administration, the peace remained unbroken.

Meantime he had begun to organise his government. The supreme control was vested in "the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council," though, under the terms of his Commission, the Governor could act, if he thought fit, without the consent and even without the knowledge of his Council. But Raffles had little difficulty in securing the co-operation of his colleagues. There was friction at times and in the end a serious difference of opinion between him and Colonel Gillespie. But he found in his successor, General Nightingall, a devoted friend and ally. The two Dutch members were as loyal as they were hard-working.

In five of the twenty-one districts into which the island was divided there was no established native ruler. These districts, therefore, were directly controlled by the Governor-in-Council through subordinate British officials. In each of the remaining districts, the principal chief, after taking an oath of allegiance to the British Crown and obedience to the Governor, was recognised as "Regent" holding the supreme executive authority in all local affairs but advised by a British official stationed as Resident at his court. To provide these Residents as well as the staff required in the other districts and at headquarters Raffles had to improvise a civil service partly from the best of the old Dutch officials, but mainly from such Englishmen as he could find in Java or could collect at short notice from elsewhere. On the Residents, out at their lonely posts, rested the chief burden of the day-to-day government of the country. Raffles pro-

vided them with carefully drafted instructions, but at every turn they had to act on their own initiative and their own resources. In one of the most masterly of all his official papers, the Minute of February 11, 1814, Raffles paid a fine tribute to their work. "Placed in situations which, but a few years ago, were considered only as affording a fortune to the individual . . . and so uncertain in their tenure that every blast that blew was expected to bring news of a change which would remove them from the island, they have, without an exception, felt the honour and character of the British nation prompt them above every selfish consideration, and in the short space of six months enabled me to effect a revolution which two centuries of the Dutch administration could scarcely dream of. . . . I might challenge a better illustration of the British character to be afforded."

As regards the legal system Raffles decided to follow the example set in British India. Justice between native and native was to be administered as far as possible in accordance with native law. In its final form Raffles' system left minor cases wholly to the native courts. Major cases and nearly all criminal cases were tried before a circuit-judge who visited each district once in three months. The facts were determined by a native jury of five. No pleaders were allowed. The law was expounded by the chief priests and native fiscals, and the opinion of the circuit-judge was given. If all these agreed, sentence was pronounced and executed. If not, the decision was referred to the Governor. Punishment by torture or mutilation, hitherto customary, was explicitly and universally abolished. For cases in which Europeans were concerned, courts were established at the three chief commercial centres, Batavia, Samarang and Sourabaya. For civil cases the Roman-Dutch law was continued in force. In criminal cases, for the most part, the milder English law was prescribed. The only other innovation was "trial by jury."

There was one further question of law in which Raffles' sympathies were engaged. Slavery, in some degree, had probably existed in Java from early times, but it had not been very prevalent. Some of the Javanese owned slaves, it appears, but not many. Nine-tenths of the 30,000 slaves in Java at the time of the British conquest, so Raffles declared, had been imported by the Dutch, mainly for domestic service. The Javanese themselves had never been enslaved, but the supply was maintained by a vigorous slave trade among the neighbouring islands. To abolish slavery at a stroke was at least as impossible in Java as it had been for Lord Wellesley in British India in 1805. Raffles could not thus destroy, by mere right of conquest, the private property of colonists or chiefs. But he promptly doubled the duty on the importation of slaves and prohibited the trade in children under fourteen ; and, as soon as the British Act of 1811, making slave-trading a felony, was promulgated, he re-enacted it as a colonial law. The sources of supply were thus dried up. Further, Raffles decreed that all slaves must be registered on the West Indian plan, so as to prevent any illicit increase in their number. Finally, he proposed to amend the colonial law so as to give slaves personal rights which could be vindicated in the courts and to allow them to possess property with which, after seven years, they might buy their freedom. These last proposals, however, had not been approved by the Government of India before Raffles' administration came to an end ; and, meantime, the Court of Directors had sharply censured him for " disposing prematurely of property that might belong to the Company " ! Raffles, however, could console himself with the *fait accompli*. The slave trade abolished, slavery could not long survive. Many of the Dutch colonists, moreover, shared their new Governor's philanthropic sentiments ; and, before he left Java, a Benevolent Society was founded, in which several Dutchmen took part, on the model of the African Institution in England and with the object of

promoting the welfare of the slaves and providing for those who obtained their freedom.

The establishment of law and order was Raffles' first duty ; but behind it, behind all his government, lay the basic question of finance ; and his hardest task was to make this bankrupt dependency pay its way. He knew well enough that the Merchant Company he served would reassert its original policy of withdrawal unless it could be reassured on this cardinal point. And one of his first acts was to make a survey of the financial situation and draft a sanguine report—too sanguine, as the event was to prove—for the Directors. In 1812-13, he promised, the colony would yield a substantial surplus. Then he set to work to raise his revenue. The Dutch had raised theirs from their monopoly of trade and the system of forced contingents and forced labour. As to trade, Raffles soon made up his mind against continuing the monopoly. "Java cannot be held," he wrote, "on the same footing as Ceylon. It is by extending its trade, and not by confining it, that the interests of its local government can alone be secured." Moreover, the days of the Company's exclusive rights in the East were now numbered. The Charter Act of 1813 limited its monopoly to the trade with China. Raffles, therefore, threw the trade in Java open ; and in place of the monopoly he imposed a duty of three per cent on the principal exports and a duty of six per cent on imports. The system of farming-out the collection of duties was abolished and official customs-houses established at the three chief ports.

But there was little to be expected from the proceeds of external trade. The Dutch monopoly had cramped it. The British blockade during the war had paralysed it. It was on the internal revenue that Raffles built his hopes. The island, he saw, was exceedingly fertile. Cultivation rioted in the valleys and had climbed far up into the hills. And the cultivators ? Were they as thriftless and lazy as was commonly said ? Was it impossible with such a population

for Java to yield anything but a negligible fraction of its potential wealth? Raffles did not think so—not if the whole economic system could be reorganised on right principles. And to Raffles these principles were obvious. First, the cultivators must be freed—freed from the manifold obligations and compulsions, the almost servile conditions, of the old *régime*. His primary aim, indeed, in Java was to use “the opportunity of bestowing on a whole nation the freedom which is everywhere the boast of British subjects.” Secondly, the cultivators must be able to feel that their labour on the land was not mere serfs’ labour for their lords and masters but in their own interest and for their own profit and the means by which they might raise and civilise their standard of life. “They are neither sunk in barbarism, nor worn out by effeminacy : they have been both mistaken and misrepresented : they are neither so indolent as to refuse to labour when they feel that the fruits of it are their own, nor so ignorant as to be indifferent to the comforts and luxuries of civilised society.” But to apply these principles meant an economic and social revolution ; and in his most impetuous mood Raffles knew well enough that such a revolution could not be affected in a day. Detailed information, for one thing, was required ; and so he began by appointing a Commission of three experienced Dutch residents with Colonel Colin Mackenzie as chairman to examine the whole question of the revenue system and land tenure. Raffles, meantime, by constant conversation with the colonists and still more with the natives and by frequent and prolonged excursions in the interior of the island, was acquainting himself at first hand with the ways and customs of Javanese life. And gradually, as his knowledge grew, he built up his new system, till, at the end of two or three years, not indeed without effort but with astonishingly little friction, the great revolution was as complete as administrative machinery could make it.

The first stage was the stage of enfranchisement. All

compulsory cultivation of coffee or other crops was abolished. Forced labour was likewise abolished except for public works, and for those a fair wage was paid. The "contingents" or forced sales of produce to the Government were temporarily continued; but they were reduced to a minimum, and finally, it seems, dropped altogether. Lastly, restrictions on native trading were as far as possible removed. The cultivator was free to sell his produce anywhere to any one. The second stage, the harder and the longer, was the transformation of the old semi-feudal system of land-tenure with all its obligations into a system of individual lease-hold and systematic taxation. The abolition of vassalage was proclaimed. The native princes or Regents were no longer permitted to control the land on which the cultivator worked or to command a share of its produce. They were compensated for this loss of income by the allotment of defined estates, free of rent, and a liberal salary from Government. Their social degradation was more than made good by the new importance and security of their political status. For, as has been seen, they were recognised as the supreme rulers, under the British Crown, of their districts; they carried out all the main executive functions, including the control of police, on the Government's behalf; and their authority was backed by the Government's power and prestige. Instead of semi-independent rival princelings they had become fellow-officers of State. The lands thus withdrawn from feudal control were leased as far as possible to their actual occupants for relatively short terms and in large or small areas according to local circumstances. The rent for these lands was to constitute the one form of agrarian taxation in lieu of all the varied obligations of the old system. It was assessed at the outset at the value of two-fifths of the rice crop. Once that share had gone to the Government, the rest of the yield of field or orchard or garden would be left, to quote Raffles, "free from assessment, the cultivators free from personal taxes, and the

inland trade unrestricted and untaxed." For purposes of local organisation Raffles revived the old Hindu village system. To begin with, the lands were to be leased and the rents assessed through the village headmen who were to be "held responsible for the proper management of such portions of the country as may be placed under their superintendence and authority." But it would have been unwise to leave the headmen unwatched and unsupported; and at a later stage Raffles assigned the "immediate superintendence of the lands" to Government and appointed British officials, whom he called "Collectors," for the purpose. "It is not enough," he wrote, "that the Government lay down the principles of a benevolent system. . . . It is with the Collectors that the application of those principles is entrusted, and to their temper, assiduity, judgment and integrity that the people have to look for the enjoyment of the blessings which it is intended to bestow on them."

In his other reforms, Raffles was often adopting and extending Daendels' plans: he was "standing on Daendels' shoulders." But his land system was an innovation. Within the last twenty years, as it happened, a closely similar system, known as the *ryotwari* system, had been introduced in parts of Madras by Read and Munro; and the function allotted to Raffles' "Collectors" in Java was very much the same as those of the "Collectors" in the Company's Indian civil service. But, as he wrote to his chief at Calcutta at the beginning of 1814, he had already completed the scheme and drafted the last regulations when, in a copy of a Report of a Parliamentary Committee, he discovered what had been done in Madras. "The principles of the *ryotwari* settlement," he wrote, "had suggested themselves without my knowing that they had been adopted elsewhere; and, although I may not easily gain credit for the original design, the promoters and supporters of that settlement will, no doubt, find a strong

argument in its favour from the circumstance of its having been so early and so easily adopted in a foreign and distant colony." But, in any case, Raffles was not destined to enjoy much credit for his revolution. There is no reason to doubt that it would have proved a complete success. Elsewhere the principles of freedom and self-interest for the cultivator were to be vindicated beyond question—in India and, in recent years and with singular clarity, in British West Africa. But in Java a final proof of complete success was not forthcoming for the simple reason that there was not time for it. Some of the old scandals died hard. It was difficult, in two or three years' time, to teach every native chief not to go behind the new scheme and grasp again at his old privileges. It was impossible to prevent the headmen who rented out land from exacting the feudal services which were so deeply rooted in the traditions of Javanese life. It was impossible to abolish all the customary local imposts on the transit of trade in the interior. No social revolution has ever made a perfectly clean cut with the past. Here and there, in some shape or other, vestiges of the old abuses have always survived, at least for a time. But, if a complete, a perfect execution of Raffles' scheme could only be attained on paper, he could fairly boast of what was, in so short a space of time, an astonishing measure of real achievement. Over most of the island the new system was actually in operation. Everywhere in form, and nearly everywhere in fact, the exploiters of the old *régime* had submitted to the new. As to the exploited, they had quickly realised, with wonder and gratitude, the change that had come upon their life. The new system, so records Muntinghe, was "received not only with submission, but also with joy and acclamation among a large number of the Javanese population—village chiefs, magistrates and district chiefs included. The people were satisfied and content." And again: "The British Government have attached themselves to the whole population of Java.

They have taken under their protection the old native institutions and revised their customs and the old village administration of their choice, and set bounds to the tyranny of princes and regents." And Mr. Muntinghe is a trustworthy witness. He might have been tempted to glorify the reforms in which he himself had taken part ; but he might equally have been tempted to minimise, as some other Dutchmen did, the value of the work accomplished during the British *interregnum* in Java.


But what of the financial aspect of the revolution ? That, after all, was the crux. That was what Raffles' ultimate masters at the India House would be chiefly concerned with. And on that point, unhappily, it was difficult, at such a distance, to convince men who disliked innovations, took short views, demanded quick returns, and had from the first discountenanced and only reluctantly acquiesced in the experiment of trying to govern Java at all. Yet, even on the financial issue and even after only two years, Raffles could make a strong case. He could show that the revenue had steadily risen till it exceeded a million and a half rupees and that the debt to Bengal, incurred to give his Government a start, had been steadily reduced. And he could show that nearly half of the whole revenue was already produced by the rents of land under the new system. But had not Raffles, at the outset, raised still higher hopes ? He had—and they might have been fulfilled if his treasury had not had to meet two heavy " extraordinary " calls. In the first place, the previous Dutch Government, in desperate need of money, had sold certain provinces to Chinese speculators. The results had been—they were bound to be—disastrous to the inhabitants. Ruthlessly exploited, unable at last to tolerate their servile life, some thousands of them had already left their homes to seek a better fate in some other part of the island when the Dutch Government fell ; and one of its successor's first troubles had been a little rebellion in that area. Raffles, therefore,

was clearly right in deciding that this ill must be undone. He bought the provinces back. And it was in them, unfettered by native feudalism, that he made his first experiments in the *ryotwari* system. Secondly, the Dutch Government, as has been seen, had been obliged to issue paper money, the value of which had quickly and seriously deteriorated. Raffles was clearly right again in thinking that no financial stability or advance was possible until this handicap was removed. He bought the paper up. But to meet these costs, and especially the latter, he had no ready money ; and, further borrowing from Bengal being expressly forbidden, he was driven to resort to a sale of some of the public lands. It was a bold step to take on his own initiative ; but as a matter of "exigent necessity" Lord Minto approved of it. "I consider your measure," he wrote, "to have been an able expedient in a case of great emergency." Not so, the Directors. Raffles had parted, without authority, with the Company's assets. Those assets at least had been solid. As for the ultimate revenues in the hope of which they had been sacrificed and their proceeds squandered, they might be nothing but the figments of an impetuous young official's imagination. No : the Directors regarded it as a blunder ; and, as they brooded over it—this minor detail in Raffles' great constructive work—it seemed to them a very bad blunder indeed.

A cloud of distrust, in fact, had begun to settle on the Directors' minds with regard to Raffles and all his work in Java, and it was suddenly darkened in the course of 1814 by a curious personal *imbroglio*. Colonel Gillespie, it has been seen, did not sit comfortably in his chair at the Council table. He differed from the Governor in his attitude to the Dutch. He resented the diminution of the British garrison against his advice, though Raffles was only obeying Lord Minto's orders. He figured in more than one dispute between the civil and the military authorities. "It is quite unnecessary that I should inform your Lordship," Raffles

wrote to Lord Minto, "that I have rather a strange character to deal with ; he prides himself on his quixotism, but with all his irregularities is a man of so high a stamp and caste that I must esteem him." Such being Raffles' attitude, it was not difficult to bring about a reconciliation ; but it was arranged by Lord Minto, to save Raffles from further annoyance, that Gillespie should be honourably transferred to the Commander-in-Chief's staff in Bengal. They parted as friends ; and it was with astonishment, therefore, that Raffles learned, some months later, that Gillespie had laid grave charges against him before the Supreme Government at Calcutta. Gillespie, he knew, had not taken kindly to the sale of the public lands, though he had ultimately given his qualified assent in Council. But he did not know—for Gillespie had said nothing about it—that the quixotic soldier had disapproved of his conduct in consenting to share with a leading Dutch resident and former Governor in the purchase of some land adjoining the latter's estate. This act had, no doubt, been indiscreet ; but Raffles had done it solely in the public interest in order to stimulate the sale ; he had, in fact, forced up the bidding against his own pocket and to his partner's dismay ! But Gillespie, it seems, had construed it as a gross breach of the Governor's official trust with a view to his personal profit. Had Lord Minto been still in Bengal when Gillespie arrived, it is probable that nothing more would have been heard of this ludicrous scandal ; but in Lord Minto's successor, Lord Moira, soon to be known to fame as the Marquess of Hastings, a soldier and one who knew not Raffles, Gillespie found an attentive listener to his complaints. The new Governor-General was soon convinced that the young civilian, so imprudently entrusted with a task far too big for him, was certainly incompetent and possibly dishonest. And presently an egregious document was compiled by a department of his Government arraigning Raffles' administration and conduct under seventeen heads, mixing

up the personal and the public issues, disparaging the land system equally with the land sale. On the personal question, of course, the ultimate result was certain. Raffles' honour was completely cleared. But only after long delay ; and in the meantime the incident had done its work. It had confirmed the Directors' suspicions. Lord Minto, it was evident, had made a bad choice in Raffles. Lord Moira had quickly found him out. They ought never to have trusted his youth and his enthusiasms. The only thing now was to remove him and cut their losses in Java as best they could.



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MEANTIME the diplomatists were engaged in cutting their losses for them. As the war in Europe began to draw to an end, Raffles had penned letter after letter in the hope of persuading the British Government not to abandon its hold on the Malayan Archipelago at the imminent settlement. But when at last the peacemakers assembled at Vienna, the news that filtered through to him in his far-off island confirmed the fears which had haunted Lord Minto and himself at the outset of their great adventure. Napoleon's escape from Elba, however, and the renewal of war seemed to have plunged the whole international framework once more into the melting-pot. "The wonderful and extraordinary change in the politics of Europe," wrote Raffles to his old friend, Ramsay, "has with all its horrors, shed one consoling ray on this sacred Isle; and Java may yet be permanently English." "I entreat you," he begged William Marsden, "to advocate the cause of Java, if there is a possibility of its remaining under British protection." But his main assault was directed at headquarters. He drafted a full and able statement of his case and dispatched it (August 5, 1815) to Lord Buckinghamshire, the President of the Board of Control which, since Pitt's India Act of 1784, had supervised on the Government's behalf the Company's Indian administration. Once more he combatted the old bad reputation which Java and its sister-isles had incurred in Europe and showed that it was solely due to Dutch misgovernment. Once more he asserted that not only could the islands be made to pay their way, but already, in Java, this happy possibility had been realised. If diplomacy demanded some concession to the Dutch, "for my own part, I would make them a present of Batavia

and its environs if they required it, to administer in their own way under a political agent or commissioner. . . . Batavia might then be to Java what Chinsurah is to Bengal." No personal consideration, he insisted, influenced his plea. He would refuse, if it were offered, any further charge of the Java government, extended, as he proposed it should be, over the Archipelago. "It will require a person of high rank, either noble or military"—and then, for a moment, he betrays his wounded feelings—"I have had too much experience already of the injuries that accrue from the want of that high rank." But now as always it is the welfare of the natives that weighs most with him. "I will say nothing of the Eastern Islands in general, but of Java and of its inhabitants I can speak plainly and decisively; they have felt the advantage of British principles, they acknowledge the benefit, and feel grateful for our interference. I have just returned from a three months' tour throughout the Island, and I can safely say that regret, apprehension and dismay precede the expected return of the Dutch; that the native population, feeling and profiting by the arrangements of the British Government, are decidedly attached to it; that they will not, for they cannot, understand the wisdom of that policy which, after the price of so much blood and treasure, would transfer them to their former task-masters, and deliver them up unconditionally to their vengeance." Some months later, Raffles submitted a concise memorial to the Court of Directors, repeating his plea in briefer terms. "The acknowledged tranquillity of the country, increase of industry, improvement of revenue, and known attachment of the Javanese to the existing system prove that it has been equally beneficial to the interests of Government and . . . to the industry and happiness of the extensive population of this island." And finally he appealed to public opinion in a pamphlet on the theme of Java "as it was, as it is, as it will be." The prosperity of Java, he declared in its closing pages, depended

on the trade and the welfare of the natives. Shall Britain, he asked, deliver it again to monopoly and feudal bondage? "Shall she not rather embrace the moment, when the triumph of her arms has opened the way to a new empire in these seas, to stretch a protecting hand over the Eastern Archipelago and establish the amelioration and prosperity of its inhabitants by placing them under her own government and protection?"

It was all no use, of course. The independence of the Low Countries, and, to that end, their strength and stability, had always been an *idée fixe* of British foreign policy. It was the revolutionary attack on Holland which had precipitated Britain into the war with France. It was the French annexation of the Netherlands and Holland that had constituted the chief obstacle to any lasting peace. And to free the Low Countries and erect them into a solid buffer-state was a primary object of British diplomacy at Vienna. In the summer of 1813 Castlereagh was already asserting that the question of restoring the captured Dutch colonies was linked up with that of the independence of Holland. There were many Englishmen, no doubt, who thought, for various reasons, that Britain should keep all she had got; but Castlereagh was not one of them. A letter to the Prime Minister in the spring of 1814 shows which way his mind was moving. "I still feel great doubts about the acquisition in sovereignty of so many Dutch colonies [other than the Cape]. I am sure our reputation on the Continent . . . is of more real moment to us than an acquisition thus made. The British merchants ought to be satisfied if we secure them a direct import. . . . More than this I think Holland ought not to lose." The upshot was a compromise. In the final settlement Britain retained the Cape (for which an indemnity was paid), the colonies now known as British Guiana, and Ceylon; but she restored Surinam (now Dutch Guiana), Curaçoa in the West Indies, and all her East Indian acquisitions including Malacca.

So, in a moment, it seemed, Raffles' dream of a beneficent British protectorate over the whole Malayan world from the Malacca gate to the Moluccas had melted into nothing. By Lord Castlereagh's "direful sacrifices," as he continued to regard them to the end of his life, the frontier of British trade and settlement had been moved back to its old line. The most advanced British outposts were again Bencoolen and Penang—outside the gates. Within them the whole archipelago was again a Dutch preserve. And with the dream, it seemed too, had gone what Raffles had already done to give it concrete shape. The great revolution, the first-fruits of British rule in Java, the promise of what it might mean for the Malayan race—it had all been blighted overnight by a frost from Vienna. So, at any rate, Raffles must have thought when first the black news came. But such wholesale pessimism, as will appear, was not in the end to be justified. The dream of a Malayan protectorate might still in part, and in no mean part, come true. And as for Java the whole of Raffles' work was not to be undone. The Dutch, restored in triumph to Batavia, must have felt tempted, if only for the sake of their national prestige, to scrap it all, to try to blot out the memory of that alien *interregnum*. But they were much too sensible to destroy what they recognised to be good. They retained, for instance, Raffles' partition of the island into districts. They renewed the political agreements he had made with the native princes. They upheld his new principle of systematic taxation under official control. They kept in force, almost unaltered, the detailed instructions he had drawn up for the Residents. And if some zealous patriots pretended to ignore these wise appropriations and asserted that the whole of the so-called "English system" had disappeared with English rule, other Dutchmen were more honest. Muntinghe's verdict, for example, was frank and final. "The first, the most difficult, and certainly the most hazardous steps towards the introduction of a system of

political government and regulated taxation had been taken when the Commissioner-General took over the administration of Netherlands India in 1816."

But that, after all, was only the mechanical side, so to speak, of Raffles' work. What he cared for far more deeply was the object for which he had constructed the machine—the social liberation of the Javanese. And as regards all that side of the work his pessimism was better justified. The abolition of the slave trade could not be undone since Holland had renounced her share in it in 1814; and slavery itself, no longer fed by the trade, could not long resist the spirit of a new age. But that was all or almost all that survived of Raffles' revolution. The new-fangled *ryotwari* system, on which the whole structure was based, would have required in any case at least a generation to settle down solidly on Javan soil. As it was, it quickly crumbled away after Raffles' departure, and in 1830 the Dutch Government established the famous "culture system" in its place. In principle this system was supposed to operate to the economic advantage of the natives. In practice it reproduced in an exaggerated form the worst evils of the old *régime*. Cultivation became once more compulsory. Forced labour was again exacted. The collection of taxes was again entrusted to native tax-farmers. "Under this system the highest bidder became the actual master of the people," wrote Mr. Alleyne Ireland, after close personal study of the Far Eastern Tropics, "and he used his authority for the sole purpose of extorting the largest contributions in money, kind and labour which could be secured without driving the cultivators to exercise the only right they had—that of emigration." It was not till after 1848, when the control of Dutch colonial administration was transferred from the Crown to the Legislature, that the people of Java were once more and finally delivered from bondage. Then, at last, public opinion in Holland, which had long been restive, could intervene effectively in

the colonial field ; and with the enactment of the *Regeerings-Reglement* in 1854 began a steady process of systematic liberal reform throughout the Dutch East Indies.

But, apart altogether from its sequel, Raffles' work in Java had been by no means a mere waste of energy. At the least he had set a great example, not only of selfless labour in the public service—there were precedents enough for that—but of something rarer in the annals of the British Empire a century ago. He had been one of the first Englishmen to put in practice the new doctrine of trusteeship. In no European dependency other than India, nowhere in the tropics except in the artificial, anomalous and unfortunate settlement of enfranchised slaves under Zachary Macaulay at Sierra Leône, had a Governor made the welfare of the natives, as Raffles had made it, the primary object of his government. More than that, and no less practically important, Raffles, far in advance of his time, had conceived, applied, and gone far to prove the theory that there is no inevitable and universal conflict between the legitimate aspirations of the advanced and backward races of the world, that the economic freedom and self-interest of the native peoples are in fact, under normal conditions, the means by which the needs of the European peoples for the produce of the tropics can be most easily and most effectually satisfied. And, finally, Raffles had done something immediate and concrete for the Javanese. He had given them, if only for a year or two, a liberty, a security, a hope and purpose, a taste of human rights, such as they had never known. Was that a waste of energy? Had he done nothing? Not many men in Raffles' day or in our own could hope to do as much.

Some such reflections may have passed through Raffles' mind and lightened, perhaps, a little, the gloom that gathered round the end of his administration. "I shall come home," he had written to Ramsay in happier days three years before, "not laden with riches and spoils, but,

I trust, with some little honour and credit." But even that was now to be denied him. In May, 1815, the Court of Directors wrote to inform him that he was to be relieved of his duties in Java. They gave him no word of praise. They did not even credit him with good intentions. They curtly regretted that his administration had "rendered the occupation of Java a source of financial embarrassment to the British Government." In the following October Lord Moira's final judgment on the seventeen charges was at last delivered. It exonerated Raffles of all personal impropriety, but it condemned his work. "He has not succeeded in administering the extensive and important duties of the government of Java with that degree of efficiency which is indispensable to secure the advantages held out by Mr. Raffles himself from the possession of the colony." Slandered, censured, dismissed—Raffles was spared only one humiliation. When the time came for the formal surrender to the Dutch, he was no longer Lieutenant-General of Java. On March 12, 1816, he handed over his office to his successor. A fortnight later he left his "sacred isle." On August 19 the Dutch resumed possession.

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THERE were other shadows darkening the close of Raffles' career in Java.

Writing on board the *Modeste* on the eve of the British landing, he had confessed to his old friend, Ramsay, that, while his lack of self-confidence often made him desperately miserable, this was "one of those life-inspiring moments" in which he was "as happy as I think it possible for man to be." And indeed his first three years in Java were probably, all things considered, the happiest years in Raffles' life. There was one sharp blow at the outset. John Leyden, who, needless to say, had accompanied the expedition, while poring over documents in a chilly record-chamber in Batavia, contracted a fever of which, with terrible rapidity, he died. To Raffles it was not only the loss of a personal friend; he had counted on sharing with Leyden all the difficulties and the triumphs of the great experiment in Java. But his grief was soon muffled and deadened by the labours and excitements of the days that followed. With his assumption of the government he set himself once more to that intense, unrelenting toil which, from boyhood up, he had shown himself able, as few other men, to endure. Though his task was now immensely greater than that of the official "jack of all trades" at Penang, he was again almost single-handed. Governors are usually assisted in the ordinary routine of their administration by an experienced staff. Every project is scrutinised by several eyes. The precedents are collected. The "pros" and "cons" are stated in writing. The files mount up. But Raffles had no expert assistance except that of his Dutch members of Council, no files and precedents, and, except for one or two secretaries and a few clerks, no

regular body of officials until he had improvised a civil service. "I am here alone," he wrote in 1812, "without any advice, in a new country, with a large population of not less than six or seven millions of people, a great proportion of foreign Europeans, and a standing army of not less than seven thousand men." Nor was his work confined to the ordinary routine, though that itself must have commanded a large part of his daily labour. He was starting to build a new structure of government in Java. He was planning a revolution. It is not surprising, therefore, to learn from the diary of Captain Travers, one of his *aides-de-camp*, that "he never allowed himself the least relaxation" and that "the only recreation he ever indulged in, and that was absolutely necessary for the preservation of his health, was an evening drive and occasionally a ride in the morning." He was "often writing till a very late hour at night" and at work again at ten o'clock next day. Nor did he shirk the social duties of Government House. Dinners, garden-parties, receptions, balls—the Governor, "full of life and spirits," was the mainspring of them all. He "never retired early" and "never seemed fatigued"; he moved among his guests, "affable, animated, agreeable and attentive to all," until, at last, the party broke up and the lights were put out and sleep descended on Government House except where, through the small hours, the Governor sat at his desk. And, if Raffles never spared himself, he never asked too much of others, nor treated them with the brusque impatience of the over-busy man. "He was ever courteous and kind, easy of access at all times, exacting but little from his staff, who were most devotedly attached to him." Few Governors, indeed, can have won such intimate affection from those about them. "We have now, dear sir, known you long," ran the Memorial which Raffles received from his staff after leaving Java; "and, though some of us have not had the happiness till of late years, we all equally feel that it is impossible to know you without

acquiring that cordial and heartfelt attachment which binds us to you, as it were, through life, and renders us as interested in your happiness and prosperity as we can be in our own." Such were the feelings of all Raffles' personal associates, and they were shared, less intimately, of course, as the circle widened, by the European community as a whole. Dutch and British, they respected and admired their young Governor; and, at the end, though the Dutch could scarcely regret the imminent departure of an alien Government, they regretted, no less than the British, the departure of Raffles.

And Raffles was as free and friendly in his relations with the natives as with the European community. As at Penang and Malacca, so in Java, he made the most of every opportunity of personal intercourse with the people of the country. They were frequently in his house. He talked to them by the roadside and in their villages. When he resided for some months at Samarang, "the native chiefs were constant guests at his table." He carried on a lively correspondence with the Emperor and some of the Regents on scientific matters. And he instructed the Residents and other European officials to follow his example in making friends with the Javanese. "These were strange novelties in Java," says Van Deventer, with warm approval; for the Dutch official tradition had been to keep stiffly aloof from the native population. But what the Dutch historian calls his "catholic humanity" was not in Raffles a conscious or acquired virtue. It was natural, instinctive. He had, it seems, no touch of colour-prejudice. He liked the Malays, it may be said again. He liked them quite as much as Europeans. In his letters and dispatches from Java he denounced, again and again, the popular belief at home that they were a race of villainous cut-throats. "Who that has mixed with the East-insular tribes," he asked in his letter to Lord Buckinghamshire, "who that has become in the least acquainted with their ways of thinking, that will

not bear ample testimony that their character is as yet unknown to Europe? Even their piracies and deadly *creeses*, which have proved such fertile sources of abuse and calumny, have nothing in them to affright; nay, there is something even to admire in them—their piracies are but a proof of their spirit and enterprise, and the regulation of good government is alone wanting to direct this spirit and enterprise in a course more consonant with our notions of civilisation. And now may I ask what was the state of Scotland two hundred years ago? ” To so whole-hearted a champion, to his keen interest in their past history and their present welfare, to his simple friendliness and good manners, the Malays, in Java as elsewhere, must have responded. The opinion of one member of their race, at any rate, is known. Abdulla bin Abdulkadar, who was first employed by Raffles at Malacca as a clerk and later as a secretary, left behind him a long and discursive autobiography, of which not the least interesting passages are those in which he records his frank opinions, not all of them flattering, of the Englishmen he had known. “He was most courteous in his intercourse with all men,” he says of Raffles. “He always had a sweet expression towards European as well as native gentlemen. He was extremely affable and liberal, always commanding one’s best attention. He spoke in smiles. . . . I also perceived that he hated the habit of the Dutch . . . of running down the Malays. . . . But Mr. Raffles loved always to be on good terms with the Malays, the poorest could speak to him. . . . And if my experience be not at fault, there was not his superior in this world in skill or largeness of heart.”

Nor was it only with the human contents of Java that Raffles made himself acquainted. He knew the island—its scenery, its mountains and jungles, its temples and monuments—as few have known it. To avoid the evil climate of swamp-infested Batavia he made his headquarters at Buitenzorg in a romantic upland valley a few miles inland ;

and from there he made long journeys, from time to time, through the wild heart of the country. "The rapidity with which he travelled," records one of his companions, "exceeded anything ever known on the island before. The average rate was more than twelve miles per hour." "Indeed," he adds, with feeling, "several were sufferers from the very long journeys he made, riding sometimes sixty and seventy miles in one day, a fatigue which very few constitutions are equal to in an Eastern climate." On one long-remembered day he made his way for fifty miles through forest country hitherto unexplored by any European. "The path was frequently undistinguishable. In some places it lay over steep mountains and in others followed the course of rivers or wound through the mazes of deep ravines." But, fast and far as he rode, he found time to notice and record everything of interest he saw. "I am collecting for you," he wrote to Marsden in 1812, "a variety of inscriptions found in different parts of Java. . . . Drawings of all the ruined temples and images are in hand." Again, a year later: "The *Juliana* takes home a very compact collection of quadrupeds, birds and insects, prepared by Dr. Horsfield for the Oriental Museum at the India House. A large collection of dried plants is also sent." In 1815, he reports: "I have visited nearly all the remains of sculpture to be found in the island: they are far more extensive than at first I had any idea of. . . . Many of the Hindu deities have been found in small brass and copper casts; of these I have a collection containing nearly every deity in the Hindu mythology." Nor, of course, did he neglect his favourite linguistic studies. In the spare moments of four years' administration he made his own vocabulary of the languages of Java, extending to more than seven thousand words. And, all the while, he was trying to stimulate in the permanent European community an interest as keen as his own in the natural and cultural history of Java. One of the earliest acts of his administration

was his revival of the Batavian Society of Arts and Sciences. "With the celebrated Rudemacher," he told Marsden, "the Society seems to have lived and died; at least it has been nearly in a torpid state ever since." So he boldly refashioned its constitution and rules so as to encourage research, gradually conquered the prejudices of those old members who "shut the door against everything new," favoured it with more than one lengthy and learned discourse from the president's chair, and left it one of the most vigorous scientific bodies in the East.

It was well that Raffles was so busy—that every moment not occupied by his huge administrative task was filled with travel or social duties or scientific pursuits—for, at the beginning of his fourth year in Java, the tide of his personal fortunes suddenly changed. In November, 1814, his wife, with the fearful suddenness of the tropics, fell ill and died. It was a terrible blow. For nine years of exile she had been his close companion—more, his comrade. She had interested herself in all he did. Like him, she had learned to speak Malay. Like him, she was never idle. "Indeed, she never rested for a moment," records the watchful Abdulla; "she was always busy, day after day." At all those social functions she had proved herself an admirable hostess; she had been as popular in colonial circles as her husband. Lord Minto described her as "the great lady, with dark eyes, lively manner, accomplished and clever." Dour John Leyden fell so far in love with her as to compose a poem in her honour. In fact, to quote again the quaint translation of Abdulla's Malayan script, "she was not an ordinary woman, but was in every respect co-equal with her husband's position and responsibilities. . . . Thus God has matched them as king and counsellor or as a ring with its jewels." Inevitably, then, her sudden loss left Raffles "a lone and stricken man." When, two years later, as he sailed away from Java, he read his staff's tribute of affection, he was completely overcome, to the distress of those about him, by

the vivid memories it recalled of the happier days of domestic life at Government House. Nor was his wife's death the only blow. In quick succession the children she had borne him also died. And about the same time came news from England of another grievous loss. Lord Minto, the friend who had discovered him and trusted him and made his career, his only friend in high station in British public life, had tragically died on his way from London to the Scottish home he had dreamed of all his years in India. On Lord Minto's sympathy and confidence Raffles had leaned more, perhaps, than he knew. But he was not so much of an egoist as to minimise Lord Minto's share in his own success. "Java, my Lord, is yours," he wrote in one of the last of his many letters to his chief; "and every act of mine in its administration has been considered as springing from your parental direction." Lord Minto's return to England had left him feeling more than ever stranded and alone in his distant island; but it had had its compensation, it had meant that Raffles was now sure of one staunch champion in political circles at home—one man who knew Java, who believed in what his own chosen delegate was trying to do there, and whose opinions would command respect. And now this mainstay not only of Raffles' own credit and prospects but of the whole future of British rule in the East Indies had been cut away. In a few months' time it was only too clear, indeed, how much this last loss meant. Hard on his personal bereavements came private vexation and humiliation and public anxiety and disappointment—on the one hand, Gillespie's calumnies; Lord Moira's disfavour; ignorance, indifference and distrust at the India House, culminating in his dismissal; on the other hand, the long discussion of the fate of Java and its ultimate surrender. Thus, in the course of a few years, Raffles, with the prime of life still ahead of him, had suffered a rise and fall of fortune as great and swift as the *peripeteia* of an Attic tragedy. At thirty he was a happy man, his youthful

ambitions already more than realised, a great career in prospect. At thirty-five his domestic happiness and his imperial dreams alike were shattered.

It was well, then, that Raffles was so busy. "Activity and the cares of responsibility," he wrote in the summer of 1815, "are now almost necessary for my existence." He worked, therefore, harder than before, if that indeed were possible—there were times when he went to bed at midnight and rose at four—until at last he began to overtax his strength. "I am really too tired to write to you fully," he tells Ramsay; "my back aches from sheer hard writing for the last two days." Before long he was really ill, as ill as he had been at Penang; and this time, though he moved to higher and healthier quarters, his recovery was slow. He was finally advised that a complete change of climate was the only remedy; and he decided, therefore, that, since his services were no longer to be required in Java, he would take leave and go to England. The thought of seeing his home and friends was in itself a tonic: "for here," he wrote to Ramsay, "I am a lonely man, like one that has long since been dead." And a real cure began with the long peaceful voyage—its only unusual incident an interview with Napoleon at St. Helena at which the unhappy exile revealed how keen had been his interest in the East Indies and plied Raffles with questions about Java faster than he could answer them. So it was a fitter and a happier man, though the East had indelibly marked him, that landed at Falmouth in July, 1816. "Although I am considerably recovered," he wrote again to Ramsay, "I yet remain wretchedly thin and sallow, with a jaundiced eye and a shapeless leg. Yet, I thank God, my spirit is high and untamed, and the meeting of friends will, I hope, soon restore me to my usual health."

9

RAFFLES' hopes were fully justified. To be at home again, after eleven years' exile, among his family and friends, proved as potent a restorative as the change of climate. "He has lost nothing of himself but his colour and his flesh," wrote Dr. Thomas Raffles to his wife of their first meeting: "my cousin has an unbounded flow of spirits; I fear too much for his strength." Once on English soil, in fact, Raffles had regained all his natural buoyancy; his fits of melancholy had gone; his tongue was unloosed. "I could fill a volume with the account of our discussions on almost every subject," he wrote of a visit to his "uncle John and family." But his greatest joy was his reunion with his mother. He had never outgrown his boyhood's filial devotion. When his father died in 1812, he had had at least the consolation of knowing that, through him, the old man's last years had been freed from poverty and debt. And during all that time of overwork and worry in Java he had written constantly to his mother. "Such is the dispensation of Providence that we should be separated for a time. . . . My only comfort is that I know you can want for nothing." "If you have any wants or wishes, tell them to me that I may attend to them." "My friend and agent, Mr. John Taylor, will take care you want for nothing. Should any accident happen to me, your £400 a year is still secure; therefore you can never, I hope, be again distressed for money." The miseries of those earlier years had bitten deep into the boy's heart; and of all the man's achievements none gave him greater satisfaction than this restoration of his mother's happiness and comfort.

Scarcely less keen was Raffles' delight in the new social world in which he found himself. He had left London an

insignificant and unknown youth. He had come back to it, still relatively young, but an ex-Governor, with a house in Berners Street and men-servants and a "splendid equipage" and all the rest of it. High political circles and the mandarins at the India House might be a little cold towards the new arrival, especially if they felt uneasy as to their past treatment of him. But in the scientific world, where, through his friends, Sir Joseph Banks and William Marsden, the researches and collections he had made were now well known, he was warmly welcomed; and it was to the oriental *savant* rather than the ex-Governor of Java that Society in general opened its doors. He became, indeed, one of the lions of the season. He was so interesting, said the hostesses, so novel, so romantic. The glamour of the East encompassed him. He could tell you about the strangest things and people. He had brought back, it was said, "Eastern curiosities and treasures to the amount of thirty tons weight in upwards of two hundred immense packages." Besides, he was such a perfect guest—so naïf, so responsive, so high-spirited, and so blessedly talkative. And Raffles, for his part, wholly himself again, speaking in smiles, enjoyed it all enormously. With some of Society's grandees he made delightful and lasting friendships. With the Duchess of Somerset he corresponded intimately for the rest of his life. He was welcomed by Lord and Lady Harcourt at Nuneham. The popular Princess Charlotte and her cultured consort, one day to be King Leopold of Belgium and the confidant of Queen Victoria, became warm friends. They invited him frequently to Claremont and they gave him a diamond ring to be "worn in memory." When the Queen heard of the Javanese furniture which he had given the Princess, she promptly arranged a meeting, and angled quite unblushingly for a similar gift. She was rewarded with a pair of tables and commanded the donor to dine with her at Frogmore. But the climax was yet to come. During this time in London Raffles had composed with his usual

speed a *History of Java* in two large octavo volumes—not a work of any literary distinction, but full of new and first-hand information and admirably illustrated from the drawings he had had made in Java—and he had dedicated it to the Prince Regent. The author was bidden to attend the next *levée*. When he presented himself, the company was called to attention, the gentlemen of the household formed a circle round him, and the Prince addressed him in a speech of nearly twenty minutes' length, thanking him "for the entertainment and information he had derived from the perusal of the greater part of the volumes" and "expressing the high sense he entertained of the eminent services he had rendered to his country in the government of Java." Finally, he bade him kneel and knighted him. It is possible that Raffles had expected something better. "Why, Charlotte," said Prince Leopold in a 'ludicrous' tone, "they have made him a 'knight.'" And the gossips, at any rate, were certain that Raffles would have been at least a baronet if the Prince Regent had not been so notoriously jealous of his daughter's friends.

It is infinitely regrettable that Raffles did not keep a diary. We want his own impressions of this glittering London life on the morrow of the Peace, and his impressions, too—for he must have had them—of its dark background of pauperism and unrest on the eve of Peterloo. One wonders what this unsophisticated *novus homo*, who had never known the great world of London, who had been far away from England for eleven momentous years, who looked about him now with an exile's fresh eyes, thought of the great men of the day—of Wellington, Castlereagh, Grey, Brougham, Bentham, and the rest. We do not even know if he met them, though with Canning at any rate he corresponded. But there was one great man we know he met. Nowhere, it is certain, can Raffles have been more warmly welcomed than among that group of philanthropists known to fame as the Clapham Sect. One of its senior members,

Charles Grant the elder, was well-informed as to Raffles' dealings with the slave trade and slavery and his interest in the welfare of the Javanese : for Charles Grant was a leading member of the Court of Directors, its chairman or deputy-chairman for several years, and its chief representative in the House of Commons. And, through him or another, Raffles was introduced to Wilberforce, the high-priest of the sect, then at the zenith of his European reputation as the Great Emancipator. They were not unlike, those two—both zealots, both unconquerably youthful and quick-minded and voluble, both serious, though Raffles, doubtless, not quite so serious as Wilberforce, about the deeper things of life. And Raffles was not only an ardent abolitionist in the matter of slavery ; he was also interested in what was second only to the slave question in Wilberforce's mind—the propagation of Christianity in the East. “On the subject of missions,” wrote Raffles to Wilberforce from shipboard on the point of leaving England, “I have no hesitation in recommending attention to the Eastern islands. Nothing of the kind has yet found its way to Sumatra and Borneo, two of the largest islands in the world. . . . May not the spread of the Gospel go hand in hand with the abolition of the slave trade in those countries ?” Another great man of that day—or, rather, of an earlier day—whom Raffles almost certainly met, was the aged Warren Hastings. The meeting, at any rate, was arranged, and the time and place fixed. “Nothing will afford him more pleasure,” wrote Raffles to the Bishop of Salisbury who had conveyed to him the invitation to an interview, “than the honour of being personally known to Mr. Hastings and the opportunity of evincing his respect and veneration for a character so truly great.” So we know at least what Raffles thought of Hastings. But what did Hastings think of Raffles ? Did his eyes light up at the younger man's vision of a wider British Empire in the East ? No record has survived. The venerable figure

emerges, for a moment, from the shadows that had closed about him since the Trial, and then is gone again. Less than a year after Raffles' return to the East Warren Hastings was dead.

In the spring of 1817, with his sister and his cousin Thomas, Raffles visited the Continent for the first time in his life. For six weeks he travelled through France and Switzerland and down the Rhine to Belgium. Of all he saw nothing impressed him more than the agricultural prosperity of France and the new system of peasant-proprietorship. "When I see every man cultivating his own field," he wrote to the Duchess of Somerset, with Java, no doubt, in his mind, "I cannot but think him happier far than when he is cultivating the field of another." In the kingdom of the Netherlands, in which Belgium and Holland had been united, artificially, and, as it soon proved, unsuccessfully, by the Congress of Vienna, the old enemy of the Dutch was received "with very great attention." He talked with the ministers and dined with the King. "They were very communicative," he reports to Marsden, "regarding their Eastern colonies; but I regret to say that, notwithstanding the King himself and his leading minister seem to mean well, they have too great a hankering after profit, and *immediate* profit, for any liberal system to thrive under them. They seem to be miserably poor, and the new Government in Java have commenced by the issue of a paper currency. . . . The King complained of the coffee culture having been neglected and expressed anxiety that he should soon have consignments; and while he admitted all the advantages likely to arise from [free?] cultivation and assured me that the system introduced under my administration should be continued, [he] maintained that it was essential to confine the trade and to make such regulations as would secure it and its profits exclusively to the mother-country." Nothing, in fact, had come of Castlereagh's idea that British trade might be compensated

for the retrocession of Java by securing the right of "direct import" from the Dutch. The pre-war monopoly had been re-established together with the pre-war methods. Poor Raffles ! The old wounds must have smarted as he listened to the King. But he did not altogether despair of Java. "I had an opportunity," he goes on, "of expressing my sentiments to him very freely ; and, as he took them in good part, I am in hopes they may have had some weight."

In July Raffles was back in London, and in October, fifteen months since his return to England, he took ship for the East again. If his new post was scarcely equal to the old, it was the most important, save only the Governorship of Penang, in the Company's field in Further India. Four years earlier, in view of the uncertain British tenure of Java, Lord Minto had designated the Residency at Fort Marlborough—otherwise Bencoolen, the headquarters of the Company's operations along the west coast of Sumatra—as "an honourable retreat" for Raffles. In this arrangement Lord Moira had acquiesced ; and during the storm raised by Colonel Gillespie the post had been kept open. It was not till early in 1817 that by the Directors' formal decision Raffles' character was finally and fully cleared ; but then, it seems, they were anxious to make some small amends ; and, before he left, they conferred on him the higher title of "Lieutenant-Governor of Bencoolen," "as a peculiar mark of the favourable sentiments which the Court entertained of his merits and services." So, his health restored, his prestige re-established, still only thirty-six, with the best part of a normal lifetime still ahead, Raffles went East once more. And in one other very vital respect he was a different man from the childless widower, dejected, enfeebled, discredited, who had sailed from Batavia two years ago. The crowning blessing of those healing months in England had been his discovery of another life-companion. At the beginning of the year he had married Sophia Hull, the daughter of an Irish land-

owner ; and she now accompanied her husband to Bencoolen. "Lady Raffles," he wrote to Marsden on arrival, "presented me with a beautiful little girl, when to the southward of the Cape. . . . At the suggestion of the Radin [a Javanese chief whom Raffles had brought with him to England], my daughter has received the name of Tunjong Segara (the Lily of the Sea) in addition to those of Charlotte Sophia."

10

THE first Lieutenant-Governor of Bencoolen found his realm in ruins. Neglected by the Company during the war and then smitten by a series of earthquakes, the little maritime settlement lay almost derelict. "This is, without exception, the most wretched place I ever beheld," wrote Raffles; "I cannot convey to you an adequate idea of the state of ruin and dilapidation which surrounds me. . . . The roads are impassable; the highways in the town overrun with rank grass; the Government House a den of ravenous dogs and polecats. The natives say that Bencoolen is now a *tana mati* (dead land). I think I could never have conceived anything half so bad." Was Raffles, then, disheartened at the outset? Not in the least. The desolate scene had instantly excited all his passion for reconstruction and reform. "We will try and make it better," he continues, and the whole passage is very characteristic. "If I am well supported from home, the west coast may yet be turned to account. You must, however, be prepared for the abolition of slavery; the emancipation of the country people from the forced cultivation of pepper; the discontinuance of the gaming and cock-fighting farms and a thousand other practices equally disgraceful and repugnant to the British character and government. A complete and thorough reform is indispensable."

A thousand other practices? With those he specified, at any rate, he was as good as his word. The former agents of the East India Company had taken two black leaves out of their rivals' book. The Company owned over 200 African slaves in Bencoolen who were employed in such tasks as loading and unloading its ships. No one had looked after them. The adults were dissolute, the children wretched.

Raffles promptly enfranchised them, and his wife set an example of caring for the children. At the same time the native chiefs were approached, both in the neighbourhood of Bencoolen and farther afield, with a view to the suppression of all trade in slaves throughout Sumatra. It was in this cause, too, that Raffles made, a few years later, one of his boldest and most characteristic moves. The island of Pulo Nias, off the Sumatran coast to the north of Bencoolen, was one of the chief centres of the trade, frequented by "dealers in human flesh" of a type so merciless that they were accustomed to keep their captives "pinioned hand and foot" throughout their voyages. Every year some 1,500 victims were thus shipped from Nias. Clearly this evil could only be dealt with on the spot, and in 1820 Raffles dispatched Commissioners to Pulo Nias, who found the chiefs not merely willing to assist in stopping the trade but anxious for British protection. Raffles accordingly assumed the sovereignty of the island on the Company's behalf. He could plead that the Dutch had never been there; that, on the contrary, some slight connection had long been maintained between the island and the British posts on the Sumatran coast. But the Directors had long ago hardened their hearts against Raffles' unauthorised adventures, and they fulminated accordingly. "They were inclined," they told him, "to visit him with some severe mark of their displeasure for the steps he had taken"—even, it was hinted, to recall him.

The second scandal, in Raffles' view, was the compulsion laid on the local peasantry through the agency of their chiefs to cultivate pepper-vines and sell their produce to the Company at a low fixed price. The results had been as poor as in Java. The cultivators had been resentful and indolent. The chiefs' influence over them, in this matter at any rate, had been ineffective. The Company had obtained only a few tons of pepper a year. And consequently the expenditure on the settlement had far exceeded the

revenue. Raffles did not hesitate, therefore, to abolish the whole system. One of his first acts was to assemble the local chiefs and make a treaty with them, authorising him, on the one hand, "to administer the country according to equity, justice, and good feeling" and declaring, on the other hand, that the labourer must be allowed "to cultivate pepper or not at pleasure" and to sell his produce as he pleased. Finally, Raffles closed the cock-fighting and gambling "farms," from which the local Government had hitherto drawn most of its inadequate revenue, for the sweeping reason that they were "destructive of every principle of good government and social order and the morals of the people"—an opinion, as it happens, which later British administrators in the Far East have not all maintained, at any rate as regards gambling, on the ground that, since no legal prohibition can eradicate a habit so deeply rooted in the Malayan character, it is better that Government should recognise and control it than leave it to flourish in secret. On these matters, then, each of some importance and each affecting the Company's property or revenue, Raffles had acted swiftly and drastically, and, once more, without specific authority from home. But he had no doubt whatever that he had done right. He was bound, he believed, to make "such radical changes . . . as will enable the people to distinguish the political influence of the British Government from the commercial speculations of the Company and their agents." "I am aware," he adds, "that the task is difficult, if not invidious"; and indeed, although, as he said, the honour of the Company as well as the nation was at stake, it is not surprising—and certainly Raffles cannot have been surprised—that the Directors were taken aback. "Is Bencoolen," they asked themselves, "to be Java over again"? And they promptly censured Raffles for dealing so precipitately with the Company's property. Happily they left it at that.

But the Directors were soon to discover that Raffles'

energies and imprudences could not be limited to the narrow bounds of the Bencoolen district. He wanted to know all Sumatra and everything in it; and in a few months' time he was off on a long and arduous expedition through the interior of the island. He crossed the barrier, supposed by the natives to be impassable, of the great Chain Mountains which, like the Western Ghats of India, rise steeply from the coastal belt. He visited Pasumah and Padang and the deserted capital of the ancient kingdom of Menangkabu, once the centre of a Malayan Empire of the Islands, and the famed Mount Ophir, and the old gold mines. He was warned of dangers and difficulties; but nothing could stop him, or Lady Raffles either, who shared his hardships, said her husband, "like a perfect heroine." They could usually make their way on horseback; but once at least they walked as much as thirty miles in the day by the roughest tracks, and once they were carried down the rapids of a river on a raft. Often their only resting-place was under an improvised shelter or in a wretched native hut. They were often soaked to the skin by rain, or "bitterly cold," or caught in a terrific thunderstorm among the mountains. Sometimes they ran short of provisions and had to breakfast on "a little unsavoury rice." But they were compensated for all their discomforts and fatigues by the grandeur of "one of the finest countries I ever beheld," its mountains and lakes, its noble forests, its brilliant vegetation. It was in the course of one of these expeditions that Raffles and his doctor and naturalist, Joseph Arnold, discovered the gigantic flower, a yard in width from one extremity of its spotted brick-red petals to the other, known to the natives as "the devil's betel-box" and to botany as *Rafflesia-Arnoldi*.

It need hardly be said that neither scenery nor archæology nor natural science was Raffles' main object of interest in these lands. His life's dream had faded for a moment when Java was surrendered, but it had never been forgotten.

And now he was trying to reconstruct it on the mean and flimsy substructure of Bencoolen. Everywhere he went he did what he could to spread the influence and prestige of the British Government. Might not Sumatra (he began to ask himself), so vast an island and so much richer than any one supposed, take Java's place in the imperial fabric? Might not its historic traditions provide just such another basis for a kind of British Protectorate as he had suggested to Lord Minto on the eve of the conquest of Java? "At no very distant date," he wrote in a diary of his tour in 1818, "the sovereignty of Menangkabu was acknowledged over the whole of Sumatra, and its influence extended to many of the neighbouring islands; the respect still paid to its princes of all ranks amounts almost to veneration. By upholding their authority a central government may easily be established; and the numerous petty states, now disunited and barbarous, may again be connected under one system of government. The rivers which fall into the Eastern Archipelago may again become the highroads to and from the central capital; and Sumatra, under British influence, again rise into great political importance." Exciting, characteristic speculations. And, characteristically, Raffles was not content to speculate. He took a first step towards making his new vision a reality. He concluded "a conditional treaty of friendship and alliance" with the Sultan of Menangkabu. But diplomacy so sudden and so entirely unauthorised was not likely to succeed. Raffles had violated, indeed, the letter of the law which permitted no such treaties to be made except by the Governor-General in Council; and the assent of the Bengal Government, on which the treaty was "conditional," was never given. So one more project was snuffed out, one more pathway to the goal had proved a blind alley. And, though it is easy at a distance to understand and even to justify it, the cautious and pacific policy of the higher authorities must have put a heavy strain on Raffles' patience, since he knew, better

than any one else, that, unless some bold move were made and quickly made, British trade and British influence would be barred out completely and for ever from the Malayan Archipelago.

The Dutch had had a lesson in the war they were not likely to forget. How greedily the British had seized on their dominion and how fast their power and prestige had taken root ! The old rivalry had thus been quickened by a new alarm : and once the Dutch were reinstated, they very naturally determined not merely to restore their monopoly and to exclude the British more strictly than ever from their main preserves, but swiftly and steadily to extend their hold on all the islands so as to leave no opening whatever for British enterprise. Commissioners were dispatched, Raffles reported, "to every port in the Archipelago where it is probable we might attempt to form settlements or where the independence of the native chiefs affords anything like a free port to our shipping." The Dutch hold on the districts of Lampong and Palembang in south-east Sumatra, just across the mountains from Bencoolen, was stiffened ; and the west and south coasts of Borneo were brought into "effective occupation." Before long, it was evident, there would be scarcely a port throughout those seas with which British ships could trade without defying the Dutch regulations at the cost of an "international incident" and scarcely a native trader who would not be obliged to obtain a licence from Batavia and hoist the Dutch colours at his masthead. "The question is not now," wrote Raffles, within a month of his arrival at Bencoolen, "whether we are to give back to the Dutch the possessions they actually possessed in 1803 according to the late Convention, but whether the British Government and British merchants will be content to be excluded from the trade altogether."

Beati possidentes. With the restoration of all their old settlements the Dutch had recovered the strategic command

of the Malayan area. And it was perfectly legitimate for them, it was in accord with the time-honoured principles of international commercial rivalry, to attempt the complete exclusion of the British from that area. It was equally legitimate, on the other hand, for the British to resist exclusion, to retain and strengthen such foothold as they had, and even, if opportunity allowed, to extend it. But if that were indeed to be the British policy, there was clearly no time to be lost ; and Raffles, foreseeing the inevitable results of the Treaty, had already, before leaving England, submitted a memorandum to Canning, who had succeeded Lord Buckinghamshire as President of the Board of Control in 1816, explaining what immediate steps were needed if such a policy were to be adopted with any prospect of success. First, the agreements as to free trade concluded with native rulers during the British occupation should be upheld as still in force, and the Dutch Government informed to that effect. Secondly, since Bencoolen and Penang were both stranded on the outskirts of the Archipelago, a new strategic point should at once be occupied as a centre for negotiations with such chiefs as were still free from Dutch control, as a resort for all native trade that was still similarly free, and as an *entrepôt* for British merchandise. The occupation of some such central point would also be useful for suppressing piracy and the slave trade and for exercising a " wholesome restraint " over " the conduct of our own countrymen trading in the Archipelago." " Our duty to other nations and to the cause of justice, no less than a regard for our national character, requires that the peaceable natives of the islands should not be kept at the mercy of every mercantile adventurer of our own nation. The inducements and facilities to rapine are too numerous in that quarter to be overlooked." Finally, the possession of such a centre would make it easier to keep communication open with the Farther East and to develop new lines of trade with Borneo, the Philippines and Japan. As to where the

central point should be—and obviously much, if not everything, depended on the choice—Raffles recommended the island of Banka, off the south-east coast of Sumatra, about midway between Java and the Straits of Malacca. He had himself secured the cession of Banka to the British, with the very object now in view, at the outset of his Javan administration ; but it had been handed over to the Dutch by the Treaty of 1814. Might they not be persuaded to sell it back again? Next to Banka, Raffles suggested the island of Bintang, off the southernmost point of the Malay peninsula. The Dutch had once possessed a “factory” there, at Rhio, but on its destruction in 1795, they had left the island in the independent control of the Sultan of Linga. As a third choice a convenient site could be found on the west coast of Borneo. In this memorandum Raffles takes it for granted that Canning would not doubt the commercial advantages of such an establishment. It was obvious, as he wrote to a friend a little later, that it “would soon maintain a successful rivalry with the Dutch who would be obliged either to adopt a liberal system of free trade or compelled to see the trade collected under the British flag.” But on the question of the cost of upkeep—a matter which Raffles knew well enough would not be overlooked at the Treasury or at the India House—Raffles is more explicit. The cost of the new settlement, he argues, would be trifling. “As the object of the British Government is not extension of territory,” a few soldiers, to protect the station itself, would suffice. “Indeed, it would be desirable to demonstrate”—by the soldiers being so few—“to the native States as well as to the Dutch that the object of such an establishment is not dominion.” But the first and last necessity was speed. And not only because of the Dutch. Russia was expanding in the north. France, deprived of Mauritius and of the right to occupy ports in India, would be looking for a “convenient stepping-stone to Siam and Cochin China.” And American trade was increasing in

the east of the Archipelago. Meantime, "the impression of British generosity in surrendering the Dutch colonies at all is rapidly subsiding, as is also among the native chiefs the impression of our power; and it is clear that, with respect to taking possession of a vacant port or making a treaty for privileges with an independent chief, the prize is to the swiftest."

In force of argument this memorandum was one of Raffles' ablest public documents. But, in 1817, Canning and his colleagues were far more concerned with maintaining the stability of the new Europe and the friendliest relations with the new kingdom of the Netherlands than with the expansion of British trade in those Far Eastern waters in open rivalry, as it must be, with the Dutch. And when, a year later, Raffles reached Bencoolen, it seemed as if the prize was already lost. The Dutch were not to be caught napping—this time, at least. They were on the point of re-occupying Rhio, and there was no question of their selling Banka. But Raffles was not going to be robbed again of his dream without a struggle. In the very letter in which he informed Marsden of his arrival at Bencoolen, "I am already at issue with the Dutch Government," he says, "about their boundaries in the Lampooon [Lampong] country. They insist on packing us up close to Billimbing on the west coast. I demand an anchorage in Simangka Bay and lay claim to Simangka itself." High language; but what could he actually do? The Dutch were in possession; and, without going to war with them, how could Raffles enforce his "demands" and his "claims"? He thought he could do it by means of the first of the two measures of policy he had recommended to Canning—by upholding the rights of trade conceded to the British during the war by the native rulers in the disputed areas. He was wrong. His case might or might not be defensible in law or in equity. The chiefs, certainly, had regarded the arrangements as permanent. But at the Peace the British

had withdrawn. The Dutch had resumed, more or less effectively, their general control. The Archipelago, in fact, with the exception of Bencoolen and its neighbourhood, had been recognised, to use the later diplomatic phrase, as being a Dutch "sphere of influence." And it was vain for Raffles to hope, with the resources at his command, to keep native chiefs within that sphere true to their old engagements, even if they wished it, against the will of the Dutch. It was indeed small kindness to them to attempt it.

In these circumstances a man of cooler blood might have resigned himself to the *fait accompli*. But Raffles was on fire. The legal and moral rights of his case seemed to him indisputable. They had, he declared, "no reference to the undisputed possessions of the Dutch in which we desire no interference. All that they can in justice, nay, in liberality, demand under the recent convention, let them have." But the Dutch were not content with that. They were pushing beyond their "undisputed" bounds and everywhere pressing the British back from "independent" soil and from contact with "independent" chiefs. An objective critic might suggest that the Dutch probably held much the same opinion of the British. But Raffles, of course, clinging to his dream and all it meant for the future, angrily resenting not only the Dutch monopoly of trade but, as he conceived it, their tyrannical and cramping treatment of the natives. and haunted all the time by the bitter, jealous thought that the Dutch were masters again and doing as they pleased, so close to the southward, in *his* Java—Raffles, in such a mood, was blind to any case but his own, though, even in such a mood, he was careful to discriminate between the policy of the Government at Batavia and the "wishes and feelings of the enlightened authorities" with whom he had had those pleasant talks in Brussels. As to the Dutch in Batavia, they were inflamed with "the spirit of aggrandisement": they were out to "establish an absolute supremacy." And full of that "honest indignation

which every Briton must feel," Raffles determined to force the issue at close quarters. He dispatched Captain Salmond, with a small escort, to Palembang, to vindicate the Sultan's war-time treaty with the British, and to protect him, as their friend and ally, from Dutch encroachments. The result was comical. The Dutch had already occupied Palembang in force, and the Commissioner in charge was no other than Mr. Muntinghe who had served so loyally on Raffles' Council in Java. He knew, therefore, with whom he had to deal ; he knew something of Raffles' great ambitions and whither they led ; and he was a Dutch patriot. So he promptly arrested the Captain and his escort and returned them in a Dutch warship to Bencoolen. " I have nothing to send my friend but tears," wrote the unfortunate Sultan to Raffles.

And what could Raffles do now ? There was only one course left. He drew up a solemn official Protest (August 15, 1818) against the iniquities of the Batavian Government—and published it to the world ! It did not mince matters ; and the Dutch were naturally furious. " They say," wrote Raffles, and some later Dutch historians have said much the same, " I am a Spirit that will never allow the East to be quiet and that this second Elba in which I am placed is not half secure enough." And Brussels was as angry as Batavia. Counter-protests began quickly to accumulate at the British Foreign Office. Every point of Raffles' conduct that could bear an anti-Dutch construction—and there were many of them—was enumerated by the Netherlands Government. Their good friends in London, it was plain, must be quite unaware of what was happening. It was certainly an awkward situation for British ministers. Were they to disavow Raffles and apologise ? Or should they attempt a mild and conciliatory defence of him ? After all, he had a case of a kind. The status of the Sultan of Palembang at any rate permitted of discussion. It had not been defined in the Treaty ; and the Dutch authorities on the

spot at the time had at least hinted at a compromise or a reference to Europe. As to the island of Pulo Nias, again, of which Raffles, it now appeared, had robbed the Dutch, it might have been gently argued that it had never been in Dutch occupation, that it lay within the British "sphere" on the west coast of Sumatra, that the native chiefs had asked for British protection, and that the main reason for taking it over had been to promote what the Dutch Government, like all the leading governments in Europe, had publicly admitted to be a great cause—the abolition of the slave trade. But Canning at the Board of Control and his colleagues at the Foreign Office made no fight at all. They were almost as angry with Raffles as their friends in Brussels. Canning, indeed, pressed for his immediate recall—and certainly, in the light of that public Protest, it is easy to understand his feelings. But it was ultimately decided by the Cabinet to await the judgment of the Supreme Government at Calcutta. Meantime Raffles was sternly censured both by Canning and by the Court.

Raffles had never curbed himself out of regard for the known opinions of his superiors. He had always done what he thought right and had learned to take lightly—rather too lightly, perhaps—any subsequent manifestations of official displeasure. But this time the reproof went home. Or rather the rebuff. It was not that he felt guilty, but that he saw his life-dream once more dispersing into the air. Neither at the Foreign Office, nor at the India House, it now seemed clear, would he obtain any support whatever in resisting the exclusions and encroachments of the Dutch, however substantial, however disastrous to British interests in the East. Was Sumatra, then, to be another Java? He had never, indeed, regarded his post at Bencoolen as giving him anything like the same scope and chance as his post at Batavia. He might again "do all the good he could" while he was there: but even in sanguine moments, when he climbed the mountain crests and looked down on the

eastward valleys and all their luxuriant life, when the future seemed so full of promises, when he jotted down in his diary his project of a Pan-Sumatran Protectorate, he knew well enough that the key to the future, the hope of his dream's fulfilment, lay somewhere outside Sumatra, somewhere nearer the strategic centre of the Archipelago. And now his masters in London had shown themselves at once indifferent to the protection of British interests in Sumatra and hostile to any idea of a new settlement beyond it. The repudiation of Raffles' policy could not have been more explicit if Canning had torn up his memorandum and thrown the pieces in his face. What, then, could he do? What, indeed, had he done? Would he return to England, when the time came, with no more lasting achievement on record in Sumatra than in Java, with nothing added to his credit, with a notable reputation as a collector of oriental curiosities but, as to greater matters, known to the world as nothing but a visionary imperialist who was always at odds with the authorities and whose grandiose schemes never got beyond the realms of paper they were written on?

At this dark moment light came from an unexpected quarter. A few months before he published his Protest and provoked the storm, Raffles had sent a full report of the situation as he saw it to the Supreme Government. "We are left with only one spot," he had written, "upon which we can raise the British flag as a mart for commerce between the Mauritius and China, and that spot Prince of Wales' Island, to which port but a very small portion of the trade of the Archipelago can be brought." And, after detailing the Dutch restrictions and aggressions, he had expressed a hope that his "line of conduct" would meet with approval. It could not be a very confident hope, in view of what had happened at the close of Raffles' career in Java. But the Marquess of Hastings was not a little-minded man; he was quite prepared to revise Lord Moira's opinions; and when he read Raffles' report, confirmed as it was, no

doubt, by similar reports from elsewhere, he found himself in cordial agreement with it. Indeed, he was soon using language about the Dutch at least as vehement as Raffles'—"boundless aggrandisement and rapacity," "monopolising the commerce of the Eastern Archipelago," "excluding the English from those advantages which they have long enjoyed" . . . And to Raffles himself he wrote in very gratifying terms. "It was painful to me that I had, in the course of my public duty, to express an opinion unfavourable to certain of your measures in Java. The disapprobation, as you would perceive, affected their prudence alone; on the other hand, no person can have felt more strongly than I did your anxious and unwearied exertions for ameliorating the condition of the native inhabitants under your sway. . . . I request you to consider yourself at liberty to carry into execution your wish of visiting Bengal whensoever your convenience and the state of affairs in the Island may afford an eligible opportunity." Clearly, then, Lord Hastings was not going to support the case for Raffles' dismissal. On the contrary, he fully shared his lieutenant's desire to resist the Dutch advance; and, that being so, he needed him as Lord Minto had needed him in 1811. Thus, in October, 1818, Raffles was once more crossing the Bay of Bengal and again in a small frail sailing-ship. It lost a mast in mid-passage and a drunken pilot stranded it on a sandbank at the mouth of the Hoogly, where Raffles had to wait for a boat to fetch him to Calcutta. But these omens were not unpropitious. Once more, as in 1811, Raffles' visit to Bengal marked the opening of a new stage in his career. He was on the threshold, though he could not know it, of his greatest and most durable achievement.

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II

"I HAVE just returned from spending a week with Lord Hastings," wrote Raffles, a month after his arrival in Bengal, "and am in high favour." He could not, however, he confessed, persuade the Governor-General "to enter warmly" into his views with regard to Sumatra. Towards Sumatra, in fact, Lord Hastings was positively cold. He altogether refused to take up the quarrel over Palembang and Samalanka Bay and the rest, despite the "moral turpitude" of the Dutch conduct. Nor was this attitude unreasonable. For the British position on the west coast of Sumatra was of little value except as an approach to the Archipelago. And since the Dutch were in possession of the Straits of Sunda, no advance by that route could be effected without an open conflict. Might it not, then, be better to explore the other approach—by the Straits of Malacca? Might not the ruler of Achin, a turbulent little state at the northern end of Sumatra, which so far had had no relations with the Dutch, be brought under British influence? Might it not even be possible to recover Malacca itself from the Dutch in exchange for Bencoolen? These were sound ideas; and Raffles, who, as we know, had been interested in the Malacca route long before he went to Sumatra, could not but approve of them, even if they should lead to the abandonment of all the work he had begun at Bencoolen. Lord Hastings, moreover—and this was the major point—agreed with Raffles and not with the authorities in London as to the desirability of planting a British post *inside* the Archipelago—provided that this could be achieved without too serious friction with the Dutch. Suppose the British limited their field of choice to that part of the East Indies which lay north of the Equator

and left all the rest to their rivals? By the Malacca route British shipping could proceed to China without crossing the Equator, and, somewhere on the way, a good port for a station might be found—at Rhio, perhaps (which, it will be remembered, Raffles had recommended to Canning), or possibly on the coast of the district of Johore at the eastern extremity of the Malay peninsula. . . . These were the lines on which Lord Hastings' mind was moving. Let Raffles' letters chronicle the outcome.

"You will be happy to hear," he writes to Marsden on October 16, 1818, "that I have made my peace with the Marquess of Hastings. . . . I am now struggling hard to interest the Supreme Government in the Eastern Islands. . . . Pending the reference to Europe, I fear that nothing decisive will be done. Lord Hastings is, I know, inclined to recommend our exchanging Bencoolen for Malacca and to make the Equator the limit." November 1: "I have now to inform you that it is determined to keep the command of the Straits of Malacca, by forming establishments at Achin and Rhio, and that I leave Calcutta in a fortnight as the agent to effect this important object. Achin I conceive to be completely within our power, but the Dutch may be beforehand with us at Rhio: they . . . have been bad politicians if they have so long left Rhio open to us." December 12, from off the mouth of the Hoogly: "We are now on our way to the eastward, but I much fear the Dutch have hardly left us an inch of ground to stand upon. My attention is principally turned to Johore, and you must not be surprised if my next letter to you is dated from the site of the ancient city of Singapura." January 16, 1819, from Penang, where it was learned that the Dutch had occupied Rhio: "*Me voici à Pulo Penang*. God only knows where next you may hear from me. . . . At Achin the difficulties I shall have to surmount in the performance of my duty are great . . . but I shall persevere steadily in what I conceive to be my duty. I think I may rely on the

Marquess : his last words were—‘ Sir Stamford, you may depend upon me.’ ” January 31 : “ Here I am at Singapore, true to my word, and in the enjoyment of all the pleasure which a footing on such classic ground must inspire. The lines of the old city and of its defences are still to be traced, and within its ramparts the British Union waves unmolested.”

Thus, with lightning speed, in little more than a month from the time of his departure from Calcutta, Raffles had achieved his darling purpose. He had planted a British post in the heart of the East Indies. And, for once, he had obeyed, with one exception, the orders of his superiors. His formal instructions from Lord Hastings had been as follows. The negotiations at Achin were first to be concluded ; “ but the most material point to attain ” was “ the establishment of a station beyond Malacca, such as may command the southern entrance of those Straits.” The “ most likely ” means to achieve this object “ without involving us in any discussion with the Netherlandish Power ” was “ the establishment, if practicable, with the consent of the Native Government, of a British Post ” at Rhio. “ It is expressly to be understood, and it will be incumbent on you always to keep in mind, that the object in fixing upon a Post of this nature is not the extension of any territorial influence but strictly limited to the occupation of an advantageous position for the protection of our commerce.” And lastly : “ These Instructions are framed under an impression that the Dutch have not formed any establishment at Rhio. In the event of their doing so at the period of your arrival, you will, of course, abstain from all negotiations and collision.” To forestall the possibility of a prior occupation of Rhio by the Dutch, a further set of Instructions directed Raffles, after careful investigation of a country so little known, “ to open a negotiation with the Chief of Johore and carry into effect at that place an arrangement similar to the one at present contemplated at Rhio.”

When he planted the British flag at Singapore, Raffles had strictly obeyed these orders save in one respect. He had not gone, as he was bidden, first to Achin ; but for this omission he had had a fair excuse. On arrival at Penang, he had found its Governor, Colonel Bannerman, quite vehemently opposed to the whole object of his mission. Bannerman, it seems, was terrified of the Dutch. He shrank from the bare idea of precipitating a quarrel with them. And he was determined not to share in the disfavour with which, he knew, his more impetuous colleague of Bencoolen was regarded at the India House and the Foreign Office. He was also, it is clear, a little jealous. And since Achin was within the province of the Penang Government, he could, without seeming to interfere unduly, beg Raffles not to stir up a hornet's nest at that particular point until he had informed the Governor-General of the local Government's opinion and awaited further orders. To this "earnest entreaty" Raffles yielded, not too regretfully, perhaps, for he was itching for the South. And since it had been arranged that the proposed post beyond the Straits should come within the province of the Government of Bencoolen, there at least Colonel Bannerman could not obstruct him. He could make difficulties about furnishing the military assistance which Raffles was entitled to demand, and, in the end, indeed, give him less than he asked for, so that Raffles was obliged to write to Bencoolen for the dispatch of troops from there : but he could do no more ; and, anxiously and resentfully, he watched Raffles sail off to the South.

In all that followed Raffles did what he had been told to do. Rhio being preoccupied, he investigated the rival claims of the Carimon islands and Johore as a suitable site and, having decided on the latter, he established his post, "with the consent of the Native Government," at Singapore, an island about 200 square miles in area, separated from the mainland by a strip of water less than a mile in width.

Exactly what was the Native Government might, indeed, be a matter of dispute. There was no doubt at all that the lawful ruler of Singapore was the Sultan of Johore. But who was the lawful Sultan? The elder son of the last Sultan and his natural heir had been absent from Johore at the time of his father's death in 1810; and since the Malay law required that the Sultan's body should be buried by his successor, the native Viceroy of Rhio had set up the younger son as Sultan against his will, and, when the elder brother returned and the younger desired to retire in his favour, he had refused to permit the exchange. The Viceroy, a masterful man, was clearly bent on keeping Johore in his pocket. The elder brother, however, had maintained his claim; and since the two hereditary chiefs, whose consent was required for a legal succession to the Sultanate, had supported him from the first, he had a stronger case than most pretenders. After all, he was the elder son; his absence at his father's death had been only an unfortunate accident; and his brother had admitted his right to the throne. For Raffles the opportunity was obvious. On the morning after his arrival he interviewed the Tumung'gung or Resident Governor at Singapore, who was one of the two aforesaid hereditary chiefs, learned from him that the Dutch had made no claim at all in that neighbourhood, and, a few days later, concluded with him a preliminary treaty permitting the establishment of a British "factory." Meantime he summoned home from Rhio the elder son, whom he had decided to recognise as Sultan; and he sent also Major Farquhar to Rhio to sound the Viceroy. It was unfortunate, perhaps, that, on an earlier occasion, this Major Farquhar, when negotiating with the Viceroy for commercial privileges, had recognised his puppet as "King of Johore,"* but the Viceroy, it seems, was not anxious to make enemies of the British, though, with the Dutch hanging over him, he could scarcely make

*Raffles also had addressed him as "seated on the throne of Johore" in 1813.

friends with them. Wisely, from his point of view, he determined to be neutral ; but he made it plain to Farquhar that his engagements with the Dutch were limited to Rhio.

The way was thus smoothed for the completion of Raffles' plans. The new Sultan arrived at Singapore, disguised as a fisherman, on February 1, on February 6 he was duly installed, and on the same day Raffles signed a treaty with him and the Tumung'gung, under which the British were to be free to erect " factories " in any part of the Sultan's realm, while no land therein was to be alienated to, nor treaty concluded with, any other foreign Power. Further, the Sultan's safety was to be guaranteed as long as he resided near a British station ; annual payments of 5,000 and 3,000 Spanish dollars respectively were to be made to him and to the Tumung'gung ; and the latter was also to receive half the duties levied on shipping. It was a not ungenerous bargain ; and the Malay potentates, we may well believe, were more willing to do what they were asked than native chiefs have sometimes been in similar dealings with European intruders. At the worst it must have been in their eyes a choice of evils. If the British did not settle at Singapore, sooner or later the Dutch would. And, since Raffles came to Java at any rate, it was rumoured throughout the Archipelago that it was better to deal, if you had the choice, with the British. But the Sultan and his colleagues had to face an awkward question. The Dutch would certainly be angry. And would the British, who had come with very few ships and very few soldiers in them, be able to protect them ? Would they even stay ? The great surrender to the Dutch after the war was a recent event. It had deeply impressed the native mind. Fear must have seemed to many of the Malays its only intelligible motive. Might not Raffles, for all his confident bearing, be afraid to stay at Singapore ? It is not surprising, therefore, that the Sultan and the Tumung'gung attempted to safeguard their future by writing to the Dutch authorities to explain

that the British had forced them to do what they had done ; and when Raffles heard of their letter and they protested that they had only written it for fear of Dutch vengeance, there is no reason to doubt that they told the truth. Raffles, on his part, since he understood the Malays, was all conciliation and urbanity ; but his friends were prevailed on to sign an uncompromising affidavit. " I here call God and his holy Prophet to witness that the English established themselves at Singapore with my free will and consent ; and that from the arrival of the Honourable Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles no troops or effects were landed or anything executed but with the free accord of the Sultan of Johore and myself."

That letter to the Dutch had not been by any means a piece of pointless double-dealing such as is sometimes assumed to be attractive for its own sake to the oriental mind. It showed a foresight that was nearly justified in the event. Colonel Bannerman had been right at least in expecting trouble from the Dutch. When they heard that the Englishman they feared more than any one in the East had broken from his Elba and found an unguarded spot inside the fence they had striven so hard to make impenetrable round their preserve, they were furious. Raffles was nothing but a pirate and a poacher. He did not observe the conventional " rules of the game " ; he had not dealt with the legal authority concerned ; he had discovered a wretched pretender and forced him to usurp his brother's throne. Such an attitude was not, of course, in the least unnatural ; it was almost, indeed, inevitable. Reverse the rôles, and the British attitude would probably have been the same. Nor could time soften its bitterness. Only some forty years ago, Van Deventer could still write of " that outrageous injustice which bears the name of Singapore." One can imagine, then, how fierce was the resentment in 1819. Protests, of course, were instantly launched at London and Calcutta. Nor, at first, did it seem likely that

the Dutch would be content with words. The Governor of Malacca, it was rumoured, had declared his desire to sail at once and in force for Singapore.

It is significant that Raffles was almost the only Englishman in high place who was not shaken in some degree by the impact of this tropical storm. It reached Penang first and there it did most damage. Lieutenant-Governor Bannerman bowed, almost to his knees, before it. He forwarded the Dutch protest to Lord Hastings with a covering letter of cordial sympathy ; and he wrote to his Dutch fellow-Governor at Malacca, entreating him to take no action against Singapore until the will of the Supreme Government was ascertained. " I am the more induced to make this appeal to you," he added, pathetically enough, " as Sir Stamford Raffles is not under the control of this Government." But his love of peace and quiet was to be still further tested. Raffles had been obliged to leave his new settlement under explicit orders from Calcutta to proceed forthwith to Achin ; and Major Farquhar, whom he had appointed Resident, alarmed by the rumour of an imminent Dutch attack, naturally appealed to Penang for aid. Colonel Bannerman's reply was startling. He refused to send any reinforcements until he had obtained the opinion of the Supreme Government—a matter, of course, of several weeks. He told Farquhar that he was not surprised to hear of the danger he was in, since he had himself warned him that the expedition was contrary to the orders of the Supreme Government and bound to provoke the hostility of the Dutch. But the danger could easily be evaded. The Dutch would regard resistance on his part as " adding violence to injustice." He must consider, therefore, how far he would be " justified in shedding blood " in an attempt to retain his position. In his (Colonel Bannerman's) opinion, he could not so be justified by pleading that his honour as a soldier compelled him to resist. The cruiser *Nearchus* and the brig *Ganges* would

afford him ample means for removing his party from Singapore if he should decide in favour of retreat. On the same day (March 16) Bannerman wrote to Lord Hastings, explaining that such small force as he could send would merely encourage Major Farquhar to offer a hopeless resistance to "the overpowering armament of the Batavian Government" and that an instant and voluntary withdrawal would be much less humiliating than a forcible ejection. Nor could he forbear from commenting on "the very extraordinary conduct of the Lieutenant-Governor of Bencoolen." He had posted a detachment at Singapore, "under very equivocal circumstances," and then "set off for Achin, and left Major Farquhar to shift for himself. In fact, he acted (as a friend of mine emphatically observed) like a man who sets a house on fire and then runs away."

Leaving Penang thus stricken, the storm rolled on to Calcutta. Would Lord Hastings also bow to it? Insistent warnings from home to avoid the slightest friction with the Dutch had soon begun to sap the confidence with which he had dispatched Raffles on his southward voyage. That sanguine adventurer, indeed, had not long sailed before Lord Hastings suddenly repented his decision and sent a letter hurrying after him—but happily not fast enough to overtake his rapid flight—in which he was instructed to abandon his mission altogether! On February 20 he wrote again, saying that, if the post had not already been secured, Raffles should abstain from any further efforts. But he had scarcely penned this second faint-hearted letter when a long report arrived from Raffles, announcing the establishment of a post at Singapore, explaining the details of the settlement with the native authorities, and detailing the great advantage of the site for the purpose which he—and Lord Hastings—had had so warmly at heart. From every line of its forty pages breathed the doubt-dispelling personality of its writer. Lord Hastings recovered his equilibrium. Plainly Raffles had got hold of something worth keeping.

And were we to be always truckling to the Dutch? And would they, as a matter of fact, be so foolhardy as to force the issue at Singapore to open fighting—to a war with Britain? Lord Hastings was fairly certain they would not. If only the immediate crisis could be got over without bloodshed, the Dutch would probably in the end submit, though naturally with very ill grace, to the *fait accompli*. The main point, therefore, was to gain time; and with that object, when the protest arrived, Lord Hastings drafted a dexterous reply. He had not yet received, he said, a sufficient explanation of Raffles' conduct. "A strict attention to our instructions would have induced him to avoid the possibility of collision with the Netherland authorities on any point, and so sincere is our desire to bar the way to any altercations with your Government that the occupation of Singapore has been to us a matter of unfeigned regret. In fact, after being acquainted with the extent of the pretensions advanced on the part of your nation, and before we knew of the existence of a factory at Singapore, we had issued instructions to Sir T. S. Raffles directing him, if our orders should arrive in time, to desist from any attempt to form a British establishment in the Eastern Archipelago." But the position was not quite the same now that the establishment had already been formed. It could not be abandoned "on your demand without subscribing to the rights which you claim, and of which we are not satisfied, thereby awkwardly forestalling the judgment which was to have taken place at home."

A little later Colonel Bannerman's report of his correspondence with Major Farquhar reached Calcutta; and to this Lord Hastings' reply was neither diplomatic nor equivocal. It was, in fact, a stinging rebuke. "We think your Government entirely wrong," it ran, "in determining so broadly against the propriety of the step taken by Sir Stamford Raffles. . . . We fear you will have difficulty in excusing yourselves, should the Dutch be tempted to

violence against that post. The jealousy of it, should misfortune occur and be traceable to neglect originating in such a feeling, will find no tolerance with this Government, who must be satisfied (which is not now the case) that perseverance in maintaining the post would be an infraction of equity before they can consent to abandon it." So Bannerman was obliged to bow again. He dispatched two hundred men to Singapore.

Thus, in the end, after those few weeks of vacillation, Lord Hastings faithfully kept his parting promise to Raffles. But the fate of Singapore was not yet settled. The storm had not yet abated. It was soon beating on the roofs of the Foreign Office and the India House. And their occupants were almost as much upset as Colonel Bannerman. That incorrigible Raffles! Despite their repeated warnings to Lord Hastings, he had somehow contrived to slip off and singe the Dutchman's beard in the heart of his jealously guarded preserves! Why had they not recalled the insubordinate firebrand long ago? Why, indeed, had they ever allowed him to go East again? They let loose their vexation—a not unnatural vexation in the circumstances—in more than one stiff communication to Lord Hastings; but their sentiments are best summarised in the dispatch of August 14, 1819, from the Secret Committee, the inner cabinet of the Company's administration. "With respect to the written instructions furnished to Sir Thomas by the Governor-General in Council, they have unquestionably been contravened both in letter and in spirit: in the letter, by his proceeding to the eastward before visiting Achin . . . and in spirit, by risking a collision with the Dutch in the Straits of Malacca." To make matters worse, "an amicable discussion with the Netherlands Government" was about to be proposed. "If the discussion is to be interrupted by the intelligence of fresh feuds and violence in the Eastern Seas, it seems quite hopeless to begin the work of amicable adjustment. . . . If the Dutch should

forcibly expel our garrison at Singapore, we must either submit in silence or demand reparation at the hazard of a war which may involve all Europe." Without troubling, it would seem, to look at a map, they questioned whether, under the Charter, an agent of the Company had any right "to make conquests to the southward of the Line," and "Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles cannot presume to suppose that he has been empowered by His Majesty's Government to make such acquisitions on behalf of the Crown." He has disobeyed his instructions; he has failed to make out the title of the chief with whom he has dealt; he has chosen, in fact, "to presume that the discussions will go on more favourably to this country if, instead of the tedious process of investigating the title of the Dutch Government to all that they claim, His Majesty's Ministers shall have only to maintain Sir Thomas Stamford Raffles in possessions which he has thought proper to occupy." And Lord Hastings was reminded that Raffles' previous record had "rendered doubtful the expediency of employing him at all in any negotiation or undertaking in the Eastern Seas." But to all this denunciation there was a saving clause. The Secret Committee were not prepared to take action as regards either Singapore or Raffles over the head of the Governor-General. They would await Lord Hastings' explanations. Nor was official opinion in London as unanimous as the dispatch might seem to suggest. - In Charles Grant, Raffles had always had a friend—a powerful friend, though usually in a minority where he was concerned—at the Court of Directors; and, in the course of the following year, he wrote privately to Raffles telling him that there was an active body of opinion at the India House in favour of "the further development of the Eastern trade." "The acquisition of Singapore," he confidently declared, "grows in importance." He had himself recently given an opinion, before a House of Lords' Committee, "of the value, in a moral, political, and commercial view,

of a British establishment in the locality of Singapore. . . . From all these circumstances and others, I augur well as to the retention and encouragement of the station your rapidity has preoccupied." Still more important, Lord Hastings was sticking to his guns. Further reports increased his belief in the possibilities of Singapore, and further delay confirmed his conviction that the Dutch would never fight. Nor would he allow the authorities at home to make too much of the Batavian Government's legal claims. "It was obvious," he wrote, "we could not but expect that in the event of securing a station which would baffle the injurious policy of our neighbours, they would not fail to impugn our right to take possession of such a spot by advancing some prior title to it."

Meanwhile, Singapore was winning its own victory. If the whole field had been open and Raffles had had time to prospect it all at leisure without fear of being forestalled, he could not have found a better site for a British commercial centre and a link with the Farther East. It was, it still is, the perfect site. Lying at the southern end of the Malay peninsula, it commands the shortest route between Europe and China. In Raffles' day, when shipping had to make the great circuit round Africa, there was little to choose, in point of distance, between the route through the Straits of Malacca and that through the Straits of Sunda, provided a straight course were taken without a break from the Cape of Good Hope. But for all ships that called in those days at Ceylön or any Indian port, Singapore was far better than Salamanka Bay : it meant a saving of at least 1,000 miles. And, of course, when the Suez Canal was cut, the whole stream of European shipping was bound to take the shorter route. Singapore possesses, moreover, not only a sheltered roadstead but a fine natural harbour between its own coast and the adjacent islands. Almost automatically, therefore, its position at once began to tell.

In January when Raffles landed, it was little more than a derelict native village—its ancient fame a half-forgotten story—with a handful of inhabitants and practically no trade. But the native traders quickly discovered the advantages of a post so central and so free from Dutch restrictions. And with trade came people. “Already,” wrote Raffles in June, “a population of above 5,000 souls has collected under our flag.” In 1824 that number had at least been doubled, and 35,000 tons of shipping used the port. In 1835, the population was 30,000 and the tonnage 200,000. Such quick and concrete results could not fail to impress the authorities in London. They could never, indeed, have guessed at the full magnitude of the future that awaited Singapore, but they were soon persuaded that the infant settlement was at any rate well worth keeping. They examined the Dutch claims now through different spectacles and found them less substantial. Their opinion of the new Sultan’s title and of Raffles’ dealings with him were similarly revised. And, meantime, the Dutch did nothing at all. The storm had blown itself out. Presently it even proved possible to resume “the work of amicable adjustment”; and in 1824 a final and friendly bargain was struck between the British and Netherlands Governments. Britain retained Singapore, but surrendered Bencoolen and all her claims in Sumatra. The Dutch gave up Malacca. The position, in fact, was stabilised on something akin to its old basis. The Dutch remained the insular Power, free to expand and tighten their control over the Archipelago as a whole. The British fell back on continental Malaya and the command of the Malacca gate. But there was this cardinal difference now in the situation of the British. They were inside the gate. And there were no more barriers to be passed. Northwards from Singapore the China Sea lay open.

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"THIS will probably be my last attempt," Raffles had written to Marsden soon after he landed at Singapore. "If I am deserted now, I must fain return to Bencoolen and become philosopher." And thenceforward the fate of Singapore was always the first thought in his mind. To Singapore he had hurried back after concluding his business at Achin, and it was only the necessity for his return to the headquarters of his Government that compelled him reluctantly to leave it in June, 1819, in Major Farquhar's charge. Singapore, he knew, was the crown of his work in the East; and his letters home during those months glow with happy pride. "Singapore," he says, "is everything we could desire. . . . With this station alone I would undertake to counteract all the plans of Mynheer; it breaks the spell; and they are no longer the exclusive sovereigns of the Eastern Seas." "It is a child of my own. But for my Malay studies I should hardly have known that such a place existed; not only the European but the Indian world was also ignorant of it." "What Malta is in the West, that may Singapore become in the East." "It bids fair to be the next port to Calcutta; all we want now is the certainty of permanent possession."

And since with every week that passed this certainty became more assured, Raffles returned to Bencoolen a happier man than he had left it nine months earlier. His work in Sumatra might seem, indeed, even less important and less likely to endure than it had seemed before, but he resumed it now with all the zest with which he had begun it. His first concern was the promotion of agriculture. "Agriculture," he declared, "is everywhere the only solid basis of national prosperity"; and he founded an Agri-

cultural Society, with himself as president, to discuss "all questions which relate to the produce of the soil and the people who cultivate it." Meanwhile, in place of the enforced native cultivation of pepper only, he encouraged the free native cultivation of various spices ; and he did all he could to help European plantations worked by paid native or Chinese labour. Such zeal soon proved contagious. All round Bencoolen agriculture suddenly began to prosper and expand. Forests were cut back, swamps drained, the soil cleaned and sown with grain. The native cultivators, catching the new spirit and encouraged by the concession of an individual title to their lands, vied with each other to produce the biggest crop. A beginning was also made with the cultivation of the sugar-cane. Sugar, declared Raffles with typical certitude, could be exported from Bencoolen at one-sixth of the cost incurred in the West Indies ; and he hailed with delight the arrival of an experienced planter from Jamaica. But all these efforts were still hampered by the arm-chair economists of the India House. When the planters presented a petition for the removal of the duties levied in England on their products, Raffles vigorously backed it. But it was useless to ask the Directors to foster British enterprise in this fertile and thinly-populated island, useless to talk of Sumatra as a more remunerative field for capital than the Cape, useless to plead his notorious case for "liberal trade," useless even to explain that the duties complained of operated in favour of the Dutch. The Court did nothing. And the planters could only console themselves by recording their gratitude to the Governor. A memorial, drafted by a committee of them, declared that "the great variety of beneficial changes that has taken place since the commencement of your important administration . . . has excited the wonder and admiration of every one ; and, had circumstances permitted them to have been received with due appreciation by the higher powers, there is no doubt they would have

led to results in the commercial world as great as they would have been unexpected." Raffles, indeed, had made himself thoroughly popular with the British community. "All classes seem persuaded," he writes, "that I want to make the country, and there is nothing which I wish or suggest which they are not anxious to do." Very smooth, therefore, was the path of his administration, and before long, he could claim that the new *régime* was a success. Bencoolen, he reported in 1820, was now "thriving, the remedy applied has been efficient, a turn has been taken, and a few years' perseverance will make this a new and prosperous country." "Great it can never be," he adds—a significant confession.

In much of this agricultural work and in his superintendence of the social system, Raffles, of course, was in close personal contact with the natives. As in Java, so now, he carefully explained all his new ideas and regulations to the chiefs; and again as in Java, he was constantly entertaining natives in his house, making thereby once more a notable break with precedent, since the previous Residents and, following their lead, the little European community in general, had abstained, like the Dutch in Java, from all social intercourse with the darker race. And his acquaintance with this new sample, so to speak, of that scattered Malayan folk confirmed his old convictions. "There is no radical defect in the character of the common people," he told the Directors as he had told them more than once before. "They are alive to the same incentives, have the same feelings, and . . . would as rapidly advance in civilisation as their fellow men, once relieved from the oppression and disabilities under which they labour." The abolition of forced cultivation and sale had already gone far to remove that oppression. But Raffles soon realised that Sumatra was not ripe for such a measure of social advance as he had attempted in Java. He decided, therefore, not to interfere with native feudalism, but to control its tyrannical pro-

pensities by setting himself at its head. "I have assumed," he wrote in 1820, "a new character among them, that of Lord Paramount; the chiefs are my barons bold, and the people their vassals. Under this constitution and by the establishment of a right of property in the soil, I am enabled to do wonders; and, if time is only given to persevere in the same course for a few years, I think I shall be able to lay the foundation of a new order of things." But to remove the natives' personal disabilities—that was a far harder task, only to be achieved very slowly and with infinite patience. But at least he could make a start with education, secular and spiritual. Free schools on the Lancastrian system were opened for native children. A Bible Society was founded; and an appeal was made for missionaries to take advantage of this new foothold in the eastern world. "I am far from opposing missionaries," he writes to Wilberforce, "and the more that come out, the better; but let them be enlightened men, and placed in connection with the schools, and under due control." And he begs the Emancipator to assist him in founding a college "for the education of the higher orders of the natives." "Can you not take us under your parental wing, or could you not make the Eastern Islands a branch of the African Institution under some other description?" "I promise glorious results," he tells his cousin; and in 1819 he reports: "We have already one young man and a small printing-press, but we require active zeal. . . . Let them make haste. Years roll on very fast." Presently two more missionaries arrive. "They are scholars and gentlemen," notes Raffles, "and their wives are well calculated to aid their endeavours." But he fears "they are hardly prepared for the difficulties and privations of missionary life in such a barbarous country as this." Raffles, indeed, with all his sanguine zeal and all his talk of great results, did not deceive himself. He knew well enough that in this field he could only make a beginning. "We should look a good way forward," he writes. "The short time that I

may remain in India will only serve to set the machine in motion." But with the children, at any rate, he could record a quick and real success. "The native school has fully answered my expectations. . . . I am now extending the plan so as to include a school of industry in which the children will be instructed in the useful arts." An industrial school for natives in Sumatra in 1820 ! Once more the impetuous pioneer is travelling far beyond the horizon of his times.

And during all this period at Bencoolen, as in Java, Raffles was devoting himself to his favourite hobbies. When, soon after the discovery of *Rafflesia-Arnoldi*, Dr. Arnold died, he found another enthusiastic botanist in Dr. Jack ; and he brought back with him from Bengal two French zoologists, "one of them step-son to the celebrated Cuvier." So the pursuit and collection of specimens went on apace. Government House became a museum of natural history. Strange animals and birds and plants were deposited in and out of doors, and several draughtsmen were constantly engaged in making studies of them. "Two young tigers and a bear," writes Lady Raffles, "were for some time in the children's apartments, under the charge of their attendant, without being confined in cages, and it was rather a curious scene to see the children, the bear, the tigers, a blue mountain bird and a favourite cat all playing together, the parrot's beak being the only object of awe to all the party." At another time Raffles speaks of a pet elephant four feet high and of "one of the most beautiful men of the woods," dressed in "a surtout of fine white linen. . . . He has not the slightest rudiment of a tail, always walks erect, and will, I am sure, soon become a great favourite in Park Lane." It is clear, indeed, from all the letters of this time that Raffles had at last recaptured the felicity of his first years in Java. Lady Raffles calls it "one of the most happy periods in Sir Stamford's life." And of all his delights the chief was in his family. His letters home are lyrical about

the children and their virtues. "My dear little Charlotte is, of all creatures, the most angelic I ever beheld." "Leopold has the spirit of a lion and is absolutely beautiful." They both "manage to talk two or three languages and are a source of great satisfaction to us." Stamford Marsden, too, the second son, is "doing wonderfully well and will not fall far short of the others."

Such was the happy picture in 1820. And then the tragedy of Java was repeated. In 1821 the pitiless fates struck hard again. In the course of a few weeks all those three children died. The surviving daughter, Ella, still an infant, might well have shared their grave if she had not been hastily sent off to England. Raffles and his wife were both seriously ill. And, as if these blows were not enough, Raffles lost in quick succession some of his most intimate companions at Bencoolen, including Dr. Jack. "Our hearts are nearly broken," wrote Raffles to his cousin, "and our spirits sunk, I fear not to rise again—at least in this country. . . . These events and the injury my constitution has suffered have brought us to the determination of leaving India at all events early in 1824 and I have written home for a successor accordingly." "It has pleased God to blight our hopes," he writes to the Duchess of Somerset. "All our thoughts and all our wishes are now turned homewards." It is not to be wondered at. In Raffles' happier moments, when the work at his hand absorbed him and when he talked of "glorious results," he had known that Bencoolen could never be "great." And now that illness and death were at his door, the atmosphere of decay and despair hung heavy over that rugged, steamy coast. Was it, after all, as the natives said, "a dead land"? Was it any use to spend oneself in trying to give it life again? Raffles, indeed, shut up in a darkened room, often too weak to write, may be pardoned for believing that he might now be granted his release. But in all his misery he had one consolation. If the spring in him seemed broken, if the

time had clearly come for his retirement, at least he would not go home empty-handed. Amid all the ups and downs of his career, the disputes and disappointments, the thwarted hopes and wasted labours, he had done something—something that was great and would endure. Throughout these years at Bencoolen, however much his mind was occupied with his official duties and his private hobbies, he had never forgotten Singapore. His letters rarely fail to mention it. “Singapore, I am happy to say, continues to rise most rapidly in importance and resources. It is already one of the first ports in the East.” “You will be pleased to hear that Singapore has again become a great and flourishing city. The population is already more than three times that of Bencoolen.” “Singapore continues to thrive beyond all calculation. . . . The exports and imports, even by native boats alone, exceed four millions of dollars in the year.” “My settlement . . . promises to become the emporium and the pride of the East.” He saw in it too the final victory in his personal conflict with the Dutch. He knew that they still complained of him, that they were asking for his recall, that British ministers were inclined to lend a ready ear to their “unscrupulous and enormous assertions,” but it all mattered little now. “The great blow has been struck, and though I may personally suffer in the scuffle, the nation must be benefited.” “I no more trouble my head about the Dutch.”

In Singapore, then, if nowhere else, Raffles could find comfort; and in 1822 he determined to revisit it himself before he left the East for ever. The effect was immediate. “We landed yesterday,” he wrote on October 11, “and I have once more established my headquarters in the centre of my Malayan friends. The coldest and most disinterested could not quit Bencoolen and land at Singapore without surprise and emotion. What, then, must have been my feelings, after the loss of almost everything that was dear to me on that ill-fated coast, after all the risks and dangers

to which this my almost only child had been exposed, to find it grown and advanced beyond all measure. . . . I already feel differently. I feel a new life and vigour about me ; and if it please God to grant me health, the next six months will, I hope, make some amends for the gloom of the last sixteen. Rob me not of this my political child, and you may yet see me at home in all my wonted spirits."

13

It was not only its inherent magnetism that had drawn Raffles back to Singapore. He was seriously at odds with the Resident he had left in charge. And this was the more regrettable since Colonel Farquhar, unlike Colonel Gillespie, was by no means out of sympathy with Raffles' ambitions. He fully shared in his enthusiasm over Singapore. His reports of its progress might have come from his chief's exuberant pen. "Nothing can possibly exceed the rising trade and general prosperity of this infant colony," he had written in 1820. "One of the principal Chinese merchants here told me, in the course of conversation, that he would be very glad to give five hundred thousand dollars for the revenues of Singapore five years hence. Merchants of all descriptions are collecting here so fast that nothing is heard in the shape of complaint but the want of more ground to build on. The swampy ground on the opposite side of the river is now almost covered with Chinese houses, and the Bugguese village is become an extensive town." But this very enthusiasm had its awkward aspect, since Raffles had never regarded Farquhar as the right man for the permanent charge of Singapore. His appointment had been only temporary, and by now a new scheme had been devised under which Singapore was to be transferred from the control of the Government of Bencoolen to that of the Government of India, and Mr. John Crawfurd, who had established his reputation as an Orientalist by the publication in 1820 of his *History of the Indian Archipelago*, was to take Farquhar's place as Resident. But Farquhar wanted to stay. Raffles threw out hints, explained the new arrange-

ment, asked for the date of his departure, and at last, as the months went by and nothing happened, notified Farquhar of the termination of his appointment and his decision to come to Singapore himself and temporarily take over its control. Farquhar thereupon repudiated his authority. "I *must* have acted as I did towards Colonel Farquhar," Raffles wrote afterwards, "for whom I ever had and still do retain a warm personal affection." But he was sorely tried. For he discovered on arrival that Farquhar had directly disobeyed his original instructions on two important points. He had licensed cock-fighting and gambling houses, and he had disposed of some of the best lands, which Raffles had reserved for public purposes, for the profit of private individuals. Worse still, though on this point Raffles had given him no orders, since, as he said, "he never could have supposed that a British officer could have tolerated such a practice in a settlement circumstanced like Singapore and formed after the promulgation of the Act of Parliament declaring it a felony," Farquhar had, to say the least, permitted the intrusion of the slave trade into the virgin settlement.

Raffles, therefore, had much to undo as well as to do ; and his nine-months' stay at Singapore was for him one more stretch of intense and, when health permitted, delightful activity. It was Java over again, with a far cleaner sheet and far more certainty of permanence. The undoing was quickly effected. The slave trade was prohibited utterly and for all time. All slaves, moreover, imported or otherwise, acquired since the establishment of the settlement, were given the right to claim their freedom ; and it was forbidden to consider or treat as a slave hereafter any one permanently resident within the British jurisdiction. Cock-fighting and gambling houses were similarly declared illegal, though this more controversial reform was not to prove so durable. As to the alienation of the land Raffles was determined that, whatever the cost and the labour, he

would not allow the growth of his great Eastern city to be distorted at the outset. The lost sites, therefore, were bought back, the buildings removed, and new plans made for controlling the swift development of the town and its environs. "Houses and warehouses," writes Raffles in January, 1823, "are springing up in every direction, and the inland forests are fast giving way before the industrious cultivator. I am now engaged in marking out the towns and roads. . . . I hope that, though Singapore may be the first capital established in the nineteenth century, it will not disgrace the brightest period of it."

Meanwhile a government for this new community had to be devised, and clearly on a new model. For the population of Singapore was already assuming the motley character it bears to-day—European merchants, Chinese traders, shopkeepers and coolies, seafaring Arabs, Malays of all sorts from all the Archipelago, superimposed on the original natives of the soil. For controlling the complex life of such a community no native government, it was obvious, could suffice; and, while Raffles was careful to consult his old friends, the Sultan of Johore and the Tumung'gung, and to leave the country districts mainly in their hands, it was obviously beyond their power to govern Singapore. At the same time, Raffles, once more in advance of his age, was unwilling to vest the whole function of government in an official bureaucracy. The European merchants were already an influential body in Singapore—nine separate business firms had established themselves there by 1823—and since their interest in the welfare of the settlement was obviously great, Raffles determined to make use of them for public service. "I am satisfied," he said, "that nothing has tended more to the discomfort and constant jarrings, which have hitherto occurred in our recent settlements, than the policy which has dictated the exclusion of the European merchants from all share, much less credit, in the domestic regulation of the settlement of which they are

frequently its most important members." He therefore appointed twelve of the leading British merchants to act as magistrates. Two of them were to sit once a week with the Resident as a major court of civil and criminal justice, and two others, in rotation, were to deal with minor cases twice a week. Trial by jury was instituted—a European or mixed jury for civil cases, a purely European or purely native jury for criminal cases in accordance with the race of the parties involved. The system of law was to develop from British foundations in accordance with the special needs of the community. The courts were to "apply the general principles of British law to all, equally and alike, without distinction of tribe or nation, under such modifications only as local circumstances and peculiarities and a due consideration for the weaknesses and prejudices of the native population may from time to time suggest." The merchant magistrates, moreover, were to take a share in legislation. They were to constitute something akin to a Legislative Council under the Crown Colony system of government. Local laws and regulations would be enacted by and with their advice; and they were also to have the power of initiating regulations and, if the Resident should not act on them, of requesting him to refer them for consideration to the Governor-General in Council. Further, native captains or headmen were to be appointed, with their own assistants, under the magistrates' control to exercise authority over the different classes of the native population. As to finance, finally, in a community growing so fast in numbers and in wealth, there could for once be little difficulty. "I have established a revenue," wrote Raffles, "without any tax whatever on the trade." He was able, therefore, to fulfil the primary condition on which, in his view, the future prosperity of Singapore depended. At the head of his report to the Government of India, he wrote: "I have declared that the port of Singapore is a free port and the trade thereof open to ships and vessels of

every nation, free of duty, equally and alike to all." Therein, surely, lay justification, if it were needed, for his invasion of the Dutch preserve.

Amid all this work there was one achievement in which Raffles took a special interest. Never, in any of his fields of government, had he forgotten education ; and schools for Malay children were soon springing up at Singapore under missionary control. But he had long desired to do something also for higher education and research, to create a permanent centre for the study of the languages and life of all this Eastern world in which he moved. In 1819, soon after his discovery of Singapore, he had drafted an eloquent minute proposing that such an institution should be established in the new settlement ; he had written to Wilberforce about it, as has been seen, from Bencoolen ; and the idea had grown in his mind till it seemed an essential feature of his new capital of the East. The city on the straits should radiate out its learning as it gathered in its wealth. It was not the least noble of Raffles' visions, and now he could give it, or begin to give it, shape and substance. Abdulla, who had followed his old master to Singapore where he made a living as a Malay teacher, writer and interpreter for the British and Chinese merchants, describes how Raffles invited " the Sultan, the Tumung'gung, and all the leading men of the Europeans " to a meeting and expounded to them " an undertaking of the greatest utility to this and to future generations." He proposed, he told them, to erect an Institute in which all the main branches of knowledge should be taught, but especially, at the outset, the Malayan and Chinese languages and literature. Every one, it seems, was properly impressed ; and the proceedings closed with a subscription of over 17,000 dollars for the beginning of the work. " When this had been settled and the money collected, which was reckoned up by Mr. Raffles himself, it only remained to select a site for the Institute. Consequently, on a certain

evening, he went on foot with Colonel Farquhar, conversing as they proceeded, till they arrived at Bras Bussa creek, where they halted to look around. There used to be here a sandhill covered with scrub. They then returned home—but, on the morrow, men were sent to fell the trees and to level the site ; and in five days more there came bricks, lime and artificers, with the whole material for house-building.” In about a month’s time all was ready for laying the foundation stone. “So they laid the stone below the door, and, as they raised it erect, a salute of twelve guns was fired on the hill ; and hereupon Mr. Raffles named the building ‘Institution.’” “I trust in God,” wrote Raffles home, “that this Institution may be the means of civilising and bettering the condition of millions.”

The foundation of the Singapore Institute forms a fitting climax to those nine creative months at Singapore. It was Raffles’ study of the Malay language on his first voyage out from home that had enabled him to win so quick and firm a footing in his official world. It was his knowledge of the Malays and their life that had led him to Lord Minto and to Java. It was his researches into Malayan history that had inspired the thought of a British post at Singapore. And it was the hope of spreading education and enlightenment throughout the Malayan world that had formed the brightest thread in his imperial ideal. “Thus,” he had written in the minute referred to above, “will our stations become not only the centres of commerce and its luxuries but of refinement and the liberal arts. If commerce brings wealth to our shores, it is the spirit of literature and philanthropy that teaches us how to employ it for the noblest purposes. It is this that has made Britain go forth among the nations, strong in her native might, to dispense blessings to all around her. If the time shall come when her Empire shall have passed away, those monuments of her virtue will endure when her triumphs

have become an empty name. Let it still be the boast of Britain to write her name in characters of light."

There was now no necessity for Raffles to prolong his stay at Singapore. In all essentials he had well and truly laid, or re-laid, its foundations. Crawford was now ready to take over the post of Resident, and he had "promised most solemnly to adhere to and uphold all my arrangements." And if Raffles found it hard to leave the care of his child to another, even to one so loyal as Crawford, his health was telling him—it was unmistakable—that he was lingering in the East at his peril. More than half of that busy time at Singapore he suffered from paralysing headaches. Writing of a new bungalow he had built himself on Singapore Hill, "The tombs of the Malay kings," he says, "are close at hand ; and I have settled that, if it is my fate to die here, I shall take my place amongst them." And there was a grim note in this humour ; for the doctors had warned him that only an instant flight to Europe would save his life. Yet he clung on till a few weeks after the foundation of the Institute. "Then on a certain day," records Abdulla, Mr. Raffles said to me, "Tuan, I intend to sail in three days hence, so collect all my Malay books." And when I heard this, my heart palpitated and my spirit was gone. So I asked him where he was going, when he told me he was going to Europe ; and when I heard this I could bear it no longer ; I felt as if I had lost father and mother—such was my condition that my eyes were bathed in tears. When he perceived this, his face became flushed, and, wiping his tears with his handkerchief, he told me not to be disheartened, for if he lived he intended to return to Singapore." And then follows a list of the collection which Abdulla was instructed to pack up. It is immense. It might almost be the catalogue of a king's treasure in some ancient epic of the East. There were three presses filled with Malay books, wrapped in wax cloth and packed in

hair trunks, three hundred bound books, not counting the unbound ones and scrolls and pamphlets. There were two trunks filled with letters, Javanese, Bali and Bujis books, and various images, paintings with their frames, musical instruments, inscriptions and *lontar* leaves. There were Javanese instruments with their equipments in a great box. There were many thousands of animals whose carcasses had been taken out but stuffed like life, and two or three trunks full of birds in thousands and all stuffed. There were several hundred bottles, of different sizes, filled with snakes and scorpions and worms of different kinds and gin to prevent corruption. And there were two boxes filled with coral of a thousand kinds, also shells, mussels, and bivalves. "On all these articles stated above he placed a value greater than gold ; and he was constantly coming in to see that nothing was hurt or broken."

On June 4, 1823, Abdulla, a not unworthy representative of the people Raffles loved, parted with his master for the last time on board his ship. "And then I descended to my *sampan* ; and when I had been off some distance, I turned round and saw Mr. Raffles looking out of the window, when I again saluted him. He raised his hand to me. This was just as the sails were being hoisted. And the vessel sailed. . . . Now, from the day of Mr. Raffles' sailing I have had no pleasure, but only grief."

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14

THE homeward journey opened with a touch of comedy. Four years earlier, on the same voyage from Singapore to Bencoolen, Raffles' ship had run short of water, and, on his putting into Rhio, the Dutch Resident had denounced him as a spy and refused to supply his need. If they had not shortly met out at sea an American vessel, whose captain, in rough weather and at some risk, succeeded in transshipping some barrels of water, Raffles and his wife and shipmates might have suffered agonies of thirst. And now again he was to taste the hatred he had certainly done something to deserve. Unfortunately the merchant ship in which he sailed had to call at Batavia. None knew better than Raffles that the ancient enemy would not be pleased to see him at what had once been his own headquarters, and he determined not to land. But since his wife was far advanced towards childbirth, he wrote to the Governor-General, Baron von der Capellen, explaining that only the necessity of landing goods had brought his ship to the port, and suggesting that it would be a great relief to Lady Raffles if she might rest on shore during the two or three days the ship would be detained. The Baron's reply expressed his amazement at Raffles coming to Batavia after all that had happened since 1816. He stiffly refused to have any further communication with him. In view, however, of Madame Raffles' indisposition he could not oppose his remaining at Batavia for a few days. In a polished but very sarcastic rejoinder, Raffles protested that he had never intended to land himself. And so the incident closed. A few days later they were off again for Bencoolen, where Raffles, after winding up his administration, desired to obtain the first possible ship for England.

But the East had not yet finished with her faithful servant. Months passed before a ship could be obtained, and, since disease still gripped Bencoolen, there was time enough to strike a few more blows—time to kill off three or four more of Raffles' intimates, including the trusty Captain Salmond, who named as the executor of his will "my only friend, Sir Stamford Raffles"; time to set both husband and wife dangerously ill again; time even to kill their child a month or two from birth. "Would to God," wrote Raffles, "we were ourselves fairly out of the place." At last the *Fame* arrived, and at dawn on February 2, 1824, they sailed. That evening the ship caught fire. In a few minutes it was in flames. The sea being calm, the passengers and crew were able to take to the boats and row for the shore some fifty miles away. They reached Bencoolen, to the relief of its anxious residents, about two o'clock next afternoon. The shock and the exposure were bad enough in themselves for Raffles and his wife in their feeble state. But there was worse than that in it. More than one shipload of his collected treasures had been sent home long before, but all the most precious things had been kept to travel under his own supervision. And all were lost—all that Abdulla had packed at Singapore and much more from Bencoolen, including many volumes of notes and transcriptions and sketches Raffles himself had made in Java and elsewhere and a large-scale map of Sumatra on which he had expended infinite personal labour during all his years at Bencoolen, and, of course, a multitude of unique zoological and botanical specimens, and last, but not least in Raffles' eyes, Princess Charlotte's ring. Imagine what this loss meant to him. But the extraordinary man, seasoned by now to misfortunes, refused, as he said, to repine. On reaching his house he slept for fifteen hours, and then at once began to draw a new map of Sumatra, while he set his old draughtsmen to work at new scientific drawings and dispatched natives to the forests to capture

more animals. A few of the gaps had thus been filled when, on April 10, Raffles embarked for home a second time. And now the East could do no more. It could only give him, as he left the Indian Ocean, a malignant farewell—a three-weeks' gale so terrible that one passenger who had crossed those stormy waters off the Cape no less than nineteen times declared it the worst he had ever known.

There was yet one more trial to be borne. "God preserve you, my dearest mother," he had written once from Bencoolen, "and grant that we may once more meet in happiness to part no more. The hope that I may reach England in time to keep up your spirits and give you a new lease of life is ever present." When he started at last for home, he knew that she was failing; but, if the *Fame* had not caught fire, he would probably have been in time to see her again. As it was, he found the news of her death awaiting him at St. Helena.

"Here we are, thank God, safe and sound," wrote Raffles from Plymouth on August 22, 1824. But, in truth, he was far less sound now than when he landed, more or less an invalid, in 1816. Though only forty-three, he was, as he had described himself two years before, "a little old man, all yellow and shrivelled" with his "hair pretty well blanched." He was still constantly affected by headaches. "The least exertion of mind or body," records Lady Raffles, "was followed by days of pain and sickness." But the "little old man" was indomitable. "As the spirit is good," he declared, "the body will yet mend." And since he confessed that he could not be happy and idle at the same time, he was no sooner settled in London than he began to devise once more a multitude of tasks. He set himself to unpack and arrange the contents of the hundred and seventy-three cases that survived of the grand collection. He drafted a general account of his services in the East for the Court of Directors and a report on missionary work in

Sumatra for the Bible Society, and he undertook "to give the public a memoir on Singapore." He completed his map of Sumatra and another of Singapore and had them engraved. He designed an elaborate treatise setting on record, while his memory of the East was still fresh, "whatever he thought would promote the general improvement of mankind." He even contemplated a seat in Parliament if he could obtain it "without sacrifice in principle." Bristol, Liverpool and Lancaster were mentioned as possible constituencies. One last ambition was more in character. "I confess," he told the Duchess of Somerset, "I have a great desire to turn farmer and have the vanity to think I could manage about two hundred acres as well as my neighbours. With this, I suppose, I should in time become a country magistrate, an office above all others which I should delight in." But it was several months before this project, with its promise of peace and health, could be realised ; and meanwhile Raffles was caught up in the whirl of London life. The founder of Singapore was a bigger lion than the Governor of Java, and Society clasped him again in its exhausting embrace. "Seldom a day passes without an engagement to dinner," he tells his cousin in the spring of 1826, "and for many weeks I have not been able to command an hour's leisure." But, though he confessed his surprise at being "able to carry on the war," he thoroughly enjoyed it. "All is so new, varied and important in the metropolis of this great empire, after so long an absence in the woods and wilds of the East, that, like a bee, I wander from flower to flower, and drink in delicious nutriment from the numerous intellectual and moral sources that surround me." He felt himself to be beginning at last to satisfy his vast mental appetite. "Were I not a married man," he jests, "I should be half inclined to study for a bachelor's degree, and to make up even at this time of life for the sad omissions of my youth which I can never too deeply deplore. Hurried into public life before I was

fifteen years of age, my education was sadly neglected, and in returning to the civilised world I feel like a Hottentot."

If London thus provided the starved exile with a feast of social diversions and intellectual interests, Raffles gave something in return. "I am much interested at present," he writes to his cousin in March, 1825, "in establishing a grand Zoological collection in the metropolis, with a Society for the introduction of living animals, bearing the same relations to zoology as a science that the Horticultural Society does to botany. The prospectus is drawn out. . . . We hope to have 2,000 subscribers at £2 each; and it is further expected that we may go far beyond the Jardin des Plantes at Paris. Sir Humphry Davy and myself are the projectors." The scheme caught on. Among the first subscribers were Peel, Stanley, Heber and Acland. The Government proved its sympathy by the gift of a fine site in the new Regent's Park. In the following year, the Zoological Society was formally established, with Raffles as its first President. Thus, since Davy's share in the work appears to have been quite secondary, Raffles had succeeded in founding a second great institution, to become in time one of London's most famous "sights," an indispensable boon to students of animated nature, a joy to many millions of children and their parents too. It seems altogether fitting that Raffles, whose love of animals had shared his heart throughout his life with his imperial dreams, should have created the Zoo as well as Singapore.

In the meantime he had carried through his plan of "turning farmer." One of the first friends he had sought out on his return to England had been Wilberforce; and Wilberforce, who, as it chanced, was also contemplating retirement from London, suggested he should buy an estate at High Wood, near Mill Hill, immediately adjoining one which he had just bought himself. To choose one's next-door neighbour in the country is a sharp test of friendship; and, if the suggestion was a compliment from Wilberforce,

Raffles instantly reciprocated it. At midsummer, 1825, he took possession. "The house is small but compact," he wrote to his cousin, "and the grounds well laid out for appearance and economy. The land, 112 acres, is in grass; and, as I have taken the growing crops, I must begin hay-making while the sun shines. There is a very good farming establishment on a small scale." A new life, a new field for his inexhaustible creative energy, was thus opening to him; and it was high time he took to it. London, enjoy it as he might, had begun, he confesses, to tire him. And—a graver matter—he had recently suffered from an alarming fainting fit. The doctors shook their heads. It looked like apoplexy, but they hoped it wasn't. "The last attack," wrote Raffles, "has so shaken my confidence and nerves that I have hardly spirit at the present moment to enter upon public life. . . . A few months in the country and on the farm may set me up again." And it did. The last day of the year found him writing to Sir Robert Inglis with a view to obtaining a magistracy. "For some time," he says, "I resisted the entreaties of my friends . . . but from the improvement in my health and from a desire to be useful to the extent of my ability, added to the consideration that it may afford me the means of becoming *practically* acquainted with the real state of our society, I no longer hesitate."

It is a happy evening picture—peace and content at last after so much toil and so many sorrows; the quiet green fields of an English home after so many years of exile amid the rioting colours, the streaming rains, the fierce glare and drought of the tropics; the hero of the story, a frail old man before his time, reviving the boy's delight in gardening and animals, devising with that astonishing zest, which nothing, it seems, could dull, a hundred plans for the development of his estate. Nor was the final touch wanting without which no public man's retirement can be really

happy. He must know, of course, that he has done his duty to his country ; but he wants to know too—unless he is superhuman—that his country thinks likewise. And of this Raffles could now be well assured. In the earlier months of his return it might have seemed for a moment as if his reputation was in danger. The irrepressible Colonel Farquhar was no sooner back in England than he presented at the India House a memorial stating that the settlement at Singapore had been “formed at his suggestion and matured under his personal management,” and complaining at length of Raffles’ “flagrant injustice and tyranny.” The Directors showed the memorial to Raffles, and he drafted a careful and not immoderate defence. Farquhar briefly replied, without reiterating his claim to have founded Singapore. And there the matter had dropped. To Raffles personally, of course, the incident had been in the highest degree vexatious ; and among Farquhar’s friends his claim to at least half the credit for Singapore was kept alive long after he was dead. But as to the general body of public opinion Raffles could have no doubt at all. He knew now that his reputation was secure. It was not only the plaudits of Society that told him so, nor only the weightier esteem of great contemporaries like Wilberforce and Davy, but also the explicit declarations of those very official superiors who had once condemned him. Canning, now Foreign Secretary, was the first to make the *amende honorable*. “I cannot deny,” he wrote to Raffles shortly after his return to England, “that your extreme activity in stirring difficult questions and the freedom with which you committed your Government, without their knowledge or authority, to measures which might have brought a war upon them unprepared, did at one time oblige me to speak my mind to you in instructions of no very mild reprehension. But I was not the less anxious to retain those points of your policy which appeared to me really worth preserving, and I have long forgotten every particular of your conduct in

the Eastern Seas except the zeal and ability by which it was distinguished." A few weeks later the two men met in London. "He received me most cordially," writes Raffles, "and promised me the most friendly support in all my plans. We parted under the understanding of becoming better known to each other." His masters at the India House were not so quick to make it up, nor quite so warm-hearted over it. It was not till April 12, 1826, that the Court pronounced judgment in a document which bears plain marks of divided counsels between Raffles' friends and enemies. It admits that the success of the expedition to Java was promoted by his plans and information. It questions his sale of lands in Java, but allows that his reform of the currency was wise and his revenue system promising. It approves his internal reforms in Sumatra but strongly disapproves his political measures, though it confesses that they were actuated by "zealous solicitude for British interests in the Eastern Seas and form part of a series of measures which have terminated in the establishment of Singapore." It declares that "the country is chiefly indebted" to him "for the advantages which the settlement of Singapore has secured to it. The Court considers this to be a very strong point in Sir Stamford Raffles' favour." Finally it delivers a general opinion in the following terms : "The Government of Sir Stamford Raffles appears with sufficient evidence to have conciliated the good feelings of at least the great majority of the European and Native population ; his exertions for the interests of literature and science are highly honourable to him, and have been attended with distinguished success ; and, although his precipitate and unauthorised emancipation of the Company's slaves and his formation of a settlement at Pulo Nias, chiefly with a view to the suppression of a slave traffic, are justly censured by the Court, his motives in these proceedings and his unwearied zeal for the abolition of slavery ought not to be passed over without an expression of approbation."

A not over-generous measure of praise, perhaps, rather meticulously weighed, and with one or two flies in the ointment ; but praise, none the less, in the main and on the greater points. And could Raffles, who had shown himself so often and so provocatively indifferent to the Directors' blame, expect much more of them ?

A happy evening picture, then, on the whole ; but, before sunset, it was clouded over. Raffles might well have hoped that he had left money troubles behind him for ever with his boyhood. And indeed he had saved enough during his career in the East to make his retirement quite as comfortable as he wished. But unexpected losses early in 1826 had given him a moment's anxiety. "The pressure is, I hope," he wrote, "only temporary, and I trust it will be all right again and that I shall not be obliged to seek a tropical clime again in search of filthy lucre." But he was not seriously worried. For one thing he was expecting to hear before long that the Company had granted him an annuity, not indeed a large one, but enough to set his mind at rest. What he did hear was very different. On April 12—the very day on which the Court of Directors passed their final judgment on his services—he suddenly received a demand for the repayment by him to the Company of over £22,000. The first item was a claim for the return of the salary Raffles had drawn between the date of his appointment to Bencoolen and his actual arrival there. The Court had occasionally allowed its officials to be paid while absent from their posts, and Raffles had made a formal request at the time for this favour to be extended to him. Nothing more had been said and six years had passed. The second item was a deduction from Raffles' salary in Java on account of the difference in value between paper money and dollars. Of this also nothing had hitherto been said. The third item was the amount of commission paid to Raffles on exports from Bencoolen, authorised by the Bengal Government, but subject to the consent of the

Court which had never, it now appeared, been given. The fourth and last item was the sum expended by Raffles as extra charges for his mission as Agent of the Governor-General to Achin and Singapore, similarly authorised at Calcutta and similarly never approved in London. As to the first item, Raffles had always realised that his request for favourable treatment might not be conceded, and he had deposited Government securities in Bengal which would more than cover the Company's claim if it ever should be pressed. As to the other items, the law was clearly on the Company's side. But Raffles had believed, too fondly, that the Court, in recognition of his services, would not have refused its sanction to the authority of the Bengal Government. The presentation of the full demand, therefore, without any warning, was a terrific, a stunning blow. And it was quickly followed by another. The Calcutta firm, which was charged with the business of remitting his property to England, failed, and Raffles lost over £16,000. To judge from his letters, Raffles faced these sudden blows to his peace and fortunes with characteristic courage. Within three weeks of his receipt of the Company's demand he wrote to the Secretary apologising for his delay, explaining that only the failure of the Calcutta firm had prevented his immediate settlement of the claim, and asking that his Government securities in Bengal, which had happily escaped the crash, might be taken over for the payment of the first two items. As to the others he pleaded for reconsideration and delay. He could only meet them in full at once by disposing of his main capital, which was invested in India Stock and of the property he had set apart as a provision for his family after his death. Further letters were interchanged; and it seemed as if Raffles was entering on just such another sordid controversy as had tainted the atmosphere of Warren Hastings' later years. But Raffles did not live to see it finished. After his death the Company accepted £10,000 from his widow

in final satisfaction of its claims. A rather unpleasant story.

For all his outward calm Raffles in those days can have had little peace of mind ; and peace of mind was now necessary for his health, more necessary than he probably realised. No doubt he could still forget his worries for an hour or two on his farm, in his hayfields and his cowsheds—he refused to think that he might soon have to sell it all—and he was keenly looking forward to the day when Wilberforce would move into his house next door. They had often jested together about their half-and-half ownership of the hill and the little village on its top and its two inns : “ Wilberforce has the *Crown* and I the *Rising Sun*.” And now he was busy laying out Wilberforce’s garden for him. “ He took me in with him on one occasion,” his cousin records, “ to show me what he was doing ; and I well remember the glee with which he said, taking me to a long mound which he had raised and planted with shrubs and flowers, ‘ There, I have raised this mound that the little man may enjoy his daily walk, sheltered by it from the north winds.’ ” “ My neighbour, Mr. Wilberforce, takes possession to-morrow,” wrote Raffles on June 15, “ and will previously spend the day with us.” This letter to his cousin is the last of his published letters, and it is pleasant to note that his spirits are rising again, as they had always risen, sooner or later, after each of the griefs and troubles life had brought him. “ I have had a great deal to annoy me,” he says, “ since I saw you last ; but it is a worldly affair, and I trust will not materially affect our happiness. . . . We suffer a little from the heat ; but, as we hope to make our hay in the course of next week, I don’t complain. High Wood is now in its best dress.”

Three weeks later, early in the morning of July 5, the eve of his forty-fifth birthday, he was found lying at the bottom of a flight of stairs, dead of apoplexy.

15

A TABLET on the wall of Hendon parish church informs the infrequent visitor that Raffles' body is buried there. Westminster Abbey contains a statue of him, and the Lion House at the Zoo a bust. But Raffles' true memorial is not in London, nor in England ; it is overseas, to eastward, eight thousand miles away—it is the city of Singapore.

Swifter and more gigantic than even its creator can have hoped has been the growth of Singapore. Its population in 1939 numbered over three-quarters of a million. In that year the tonnage of transmarine shipping, "entered and cleared," was about twenty-six millions, and thirty-six per cent of that was British shipping. It had far outclassed Penang which with Province Wellesley, Malacca and Dindings, had long been included in the colony of the Straits Settlements, of which Singapore was the head and seat of government. It was not merely "the next port to Calcutta" as Raffles expected it to be. The volume of its trade was larger than that of all the Indian ports together. It was, in fact, one of the twelve greatest ports of the world. The importance of Singapore as a link in the chain of British sea-power was indisputable. It was what Raffles saw it must be, what geography had made it, the Malta of the East. And, if in course of time the memory of Raffles began to fade into the background in his homeland, he was always remembered, always to the front, at Singapore. Raffles College, Raffles Museum, Raffles Quay, Raffles Place, Raffles Hotel—everywhere the city cried out its father's name ; and on the edge of Raffles Plain stood Raffles' statue, watching over the fate of his child.

The commercial and strategic value of Singapore was not, of course, its only merit in Raffles' eyes. He meant it

to be the starting-point for the realisation of his youthful dream—the spread of peace and civilisation over all the Malayan mainland. But since, as has been seen, the business men at the India House took no interest in Raffles' ideas except in so far as they were concerned with the growth of trade, this part of his prophetic vision was slower to materialise. The Company firmly declined to have anything to do with the mainland except to trade with it ; and for nearly half a century Malaya continued to be ruled or misruled by its native chiefs without any interference from the British settlements. It was a period of anarchy and barbarism. No man's life or property was safe. Piracy and brigandage were rife. Enslavement for debt was a regular institution. Local warfare was endemic. The countryfolk lived a poor and primitive life with no hope of advancement as long as the rich mineral and agricultural resources of the land lay undeveloped. But when, on the morrow of the Indian Mutiny, the British Government and Parliament became directly responsible for all the field of the Company's operations, a more active policy was presently adopted. From 1874 onwards, treaties were negotiated with the major chiefs or sultans, as they came to be called, guaranteeing on the one hand their safety and their domestic autonomy, and providing on the other hand for the stationing of British residents or advisers at their courts. By these means the whole of the Malay peninsula—from the British coastal colonies to the borders of Siam—had become, within a century of the occupation of Singapore, a British Protectorate.

That meant the transformation of its life. Civil war, piracy, brigandage, slavery were abolished. Arbitrary despotism gave place to the rule of law. The countryfolk obtained a personal security they had never known before. And, from a revenue which, for reasons to be stated in a moment, rose fast and high, they were provided, on a steadily increasing scale, with the material equipment and

the social services of a civilised community—railways, roads, telegraphs, hospitals, schools and so forth. "The Government of Malaya," reported an authoritative observer in 1938, "has been able to develop health and education to a point attained perhaps nowhere in the East except in Japan."

All that had been made possible by the fact that the change in the political and social conditions in Malaya was accompanied by an even more striking change in its economy. For the establishment of peace and law and order had enabled the rich natural resources of the country to be developed by European capital and enterprise ; and the results, especially in tin-mining and rubber-planting, were prodigious. In 1938 British Malaya produced about one-third of the world's supply of tin and about two-fifths of the world's supply of rubber. And it was to the world at large it went. Just as imports, in accordance with Raffles' doctrine of free trade, were never subjected to differential or preferential duties till the period of the "slump" in the "nineteen-thirties," so exports went freely where they would. The United States, in 1938, bought 40.7 per cent of Malaya's rubber and 54.9 per cent. of her tin. Britain's share was only 18.7 and 6.8 per cent. But it was from the export duties on those precious commodities, more than from any other source, that the Government obtained its high revenue—a much higher revenue than any other British Colonial Government enjoyed.

There was one serious drawback to this economic revolution. In most ways the life of the Malays was immensely bettered by the establishment of the British Protectorate ; but it could not convert them from easy-going, care-free folk into hard-working labourers. The deadly *crees* was sheathed, but it was not beaten into pick or pruning-knife. It was mainly industrious Chinese or Indian coolies who mined and dredged the tin or cultivated the rubber-plantations, and such became the volume of

this stream of immigrant labour that in 1938 there were nearly as many Chinese in Malaya as Malays and one-third as many Indians. There lay the major problem of the future. Malayan society had become a "plural society": it had lost the homogeneity which facilitates the development of self-government.

Such, in bare outline, was the Malayan scene when, in the winter of 1941-2, it was blotted out. In the first round of the most momentous fight the world has ever seen, the forces of barbarism were as easily and swiftly successful in the East as in the West. The Japanese swept over South-East Asia as irresistibly as the Germans had swept over Europe. Singapore, believed to be impregnable against attack by sea, succumbed to the unforeseen attack by land. Over all Malaya and beyond the darkness fell. For more than three years the fate of the Malaysians was hidden from the civilised world. But at last the tide of war turned, and Malaya has now been liberated, like Europe, from brutal conquerors. There is damage, no doubt, to be repaired, as in Burma or Europe; and, as elsewhere, economic recovery will take time; but Malaya will have her due share in a post-war colonial policy which is committed both to the material advancement of the backward peoples and to the steady development of self-government till, "trusteeship" merged in "partnership", they stand on an equal footing with the other peoples of the world.

And now I dreamed a dream, and behold . . .

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(3) Two important letters from Lord Hastings to Lord Bathurst (March 23 and April 11, 1819) are given in the *Report on the Bathurst MSS.* (Historical MSS. Commission, 1923), pp. 468-9. In the second, Hastings makes the strong point that at the time of their cession of Malacca to the British, the Dutch declared they had no claims over Johore.

(4) The text of Raffles' Singapore Treaties with the Sultan and Tumung'gung is given in Aitchison's *Treaties, Engagements and Sanads* (Calcutta, 1876), vol. ii. pp. 496 and 500. Farquhar's Commercial Treaty with the King of Johore, Aug. 19, 1818, p. 494. Raffles' Treaty with the King of Achin, April 22, 1819, p. 515.

(5) Lady Raffles' *Memoir of the Life and Public Services of Sir T. S. Raffles* (London, 1830) is necessarily invaluable, especially for the last ten years of his life. It is discursive, ill-arranged, and disappointingly lacking in personal detail (Raffles' first wife is only mentioned in a footnote of 20 words, p. 234); but it happily preserves a great number of Raffles' private letters, together with some of his scientific discourses and also extracts from Capt. Travers' journal. A lengthy Appendix contains some of his scientific correspondence, a catalogue of the zoological specimens he collected in Sumatra, a copy of his prospectus for the Zoological Society, and copies of his Minutes "On the administration of the Eastern Islands" (1819), "On the establishment of a Malay College at Singapore" (1819) and of the Local Laws and Regulations for Singapore (1823).

(6) Raffles' *History of Java* (2 vols. London, 1817) contains some rather brief but valuable references to the period of his own administration.

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(11) *The Trade to China and the Indian Archipelago* (London, 1819) is a pamphlet of 60 pages by C. Assey, Secretary to the Java Government during part of Raffles' administration: it reflects Raffles' general views and argues for a British post within the Archipelago.

(12) The chief contemporary diaries and memoirs make no mention of Raffles, probably because he was so little in England. Crabb Robinson (*Diary*, London, 1869, vol. ii. p. 143) tells one story of him which reveals his private generosity under curious circumstances. A full obituary notice of Raffles' career was published in the *Gentleman's Magazine*, July to December, 1826, p. 78.

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